Marianne Spoelman

PRIOR LINGUISTIC KNOWLEDGE MATTERS

THE USE OF THE PARTITIVE CASE IN FINNISH LEARNER LANGUAGE
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The use of the partitive case in Finnish learner language

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Abstract

The partitive (one of the fifteen Finnish cases and a typical case characterizing Finnic languages) developed from the Uralic separative locative into a grammatical case. In modern Finnish, it is one of the object, existential subject and predicative cases, representing that side of the case alternations that expresses unboundedness and negative polarity. Probably because the three case alternations differ in certain respects and clear-cut grammar rules cannot always be formulated, the use of the partitive remains a constant struggle for learners of Finnish.

This study investigates the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in Estonian, German and Dutch learners of Finnish as a foreign language. By comparing groups of learners from L1 backgrounds closely related and non-related to the target language (TL), it is aimed to explore the role of presence versus lack of relevant prior linguistic knowledge. The use of the partitive is namely largely similar in the closely related Estonian language. However, the purpose of the study is not only to gain valuable insights into the phenomena of L1 influence and intralingual influence but also to identify (common and L1 background-specific) stumbling blocks in the use of the partitive case, and to draw pedagogical implications based upon the findings.

Research materials were selected from the Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish (ICLFI), aligned to the CEFR proficiency levels, and analyzed based on combined error-frequency analyses, involving partitive over- and underuse errors and partitive-requiring contexts (PRCs).

As will be shown, the study reveals conspicuous differences between the learner corpora. In general, the Estonian learner corpus not only shows significantly fewer partitive errors than the other corpora, but also some specific error patterns attributable to subtle L1-L2 differences and, unlike the remaining corpora, a lack of overgeneralization of L2 grammar rules. The findings do not only indicate that -and how- prior linguistic knowledge matters, but also suggest that stumbling blocks could potentially be turned into stepping stones by emphasizing L1-L2 differences in the case of Estonian learners of Finnish, and by highlighting similarities and differences from within the TL in cases of learners from non-related L1 backgrounds.

Keywords: partitive case - learner corpus research - L1 influence and intralingual influence
Tiivistelmä


Tutkimusaineistoina on virolaisten, saksalaisten ja hollantilaisten opiskelijoiden kirjoittamia tekstejä, jotka on poimittu Kansainvälisestä oppijansuomen korpuksesta (ICLFI) ja arvioitu Eurooppalaisen viitekehyksen (CEFR) kielitaitotasojen mukaan. Virhe- ja frekvenssianalyseissa aineistosta analysoidaan muun muassa partitiivin yli- ja alikäyttövirheet ja partitiivin vaatimat kontekstit.

Tutkimuksesta käy ilmi, että virolaisten oppijoiden ja ei-sukukieliä puhuvien oppijoiden tuotoksissa on silmiinpästviä eroja. Virolaisten aineistosta löytyy yleisesti tilastollisesti vähemmän partitiivivirheitä kuin kahdesta muusta osakorpuksesta ja lisäksi myös virhekategorioita ja -rakenteita, jotka johtunevat lähdekielen vaikutuksesta. Läheksi saksalaisten ja hollantilaisten tuotoksissa on selvästi enemmän kohdekielen sääntöjen yliyleistämistä kuin virolaisten osakorpuksessa. Tutkimustulokset siis osoittavat, että lähdekieli vaikuttaa kohdekielen oppimiseen, ja sen, miten se vaikuttaa. Lisäksi tutkimustulosten avulla on mahdollista kehitettä sellaisia opetuksen apuvälineitä, joilla voidaan selventää virolaisille suomenoppijille L1:n ja L2:n partitiivin käytön eroja ja yhtäläisyksyksiä ja tehostaa oppimista; ei-sukukielisten oppijoiden opetuksessa ovat puolestaan kohdekielen ja sijanvaihteluiden sisäiset tunnusmerkit tärkeitä.

Asiasanat: partitiivi - oppijankielen tutkimus - lähde- ja kohdekielen vaikutus
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It was shortly after Midsummer, five years ago, that I left the countryside of the north of the Netherlands and headed twelve degrees more north to pursue a Ph.D in Finnish as a foreign language. My time in Finland has been an unforgettable journey, during which I have learned and gained more than I could have ever imagined. One of the joys of completing my dissertation is to look back on my journey of the past few years and take a moment to thank everyone who has helped and supported me along the way.

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Leens – Groningen, Easter 2013,
Marianne Spoelman
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1 Introduction

Learner language is the written or oral language produced by learners (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 4). Rather than interlanguage, the term learner language does not allude to the proficiency level or norms learners are expected to reach (cf. Latomaa, 1993). This dissertation reports on a corpus study of written Finnish learner language. Finnish learner language can be split into Finnish as a second language (L2) and Finnish as a foreign language, of which the latter is the object of the current investigation.

According to traditional definitions, L2 learning typically takes place in a setting in which the target language (i.e. the language to be learned) is the language spoken in the community. In the case of foreign language learning, the target language plays no major rule in the community and is primarily learned in formal classroom settings (De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2005: 7). The term Second Language Acquisition is generally used as an umbrella term to cover both types of learning (R. Ellis, 2008: 6) as it is assumed that the learning processes found in each are essentially similar (De Bot, Lowie & Verspoor, 2005). In order not to lose sight of the impact of the formal instructional context in which the learning of Finnish as a foreign language usually takes place, the term foreign language learning process is hereafter used as the more refined synonym of Second Language Acquisition.

The analysis of learner language is an obvious starting point in the study of how languages are learned, because the language that learners produce at different stages of development provides insights into the language learning process (Ellis, 2008: 41). As far as the learning of foreign languages is concerned, many people have the idea that certain languages are more difficult to learn than others. As a consequence, some languages have gained a notorious reputation for being difficult to learn, while in fact each language presents its own challenges and no single language can be considered inherently difficult. Finnish has for example a widespread reputation for being a difficult language, while it is not perceived as that much of a challenge for learners from the closely related Estonian language. Yet, whether it takes much time or effort to learn a language does not only depend on the characteristics of the target language itself but also on variables such as the individual characteristics of the language learner, the learning context, the amount of exposure and the perceived distance between the target language and the learner's L1 background.
As for the distance between languages, it is widely accepted that the learning of languages that are typologically similar and genetically related to a learner's mother tongue takes considerably less time and effort than the learning of non-related languages, all other variables being equal. Because of the extremely complex interaction between languages and the other variables involved in language learning, the methodological challenges emerging from this and the shift of theoretical perspectives, there is however no general agreement on the exact role of the L1 in foreign language learning. The purpose of the current study is to gain additional insight into this matter by investigating the use of the partitive case in the written Finnish produced by students from a closely related L1 background (Estonian) and non-related L1 backgrounds (German and Dutch).

The current study is meant to be more than just another study on the phenomenon of L1 influence. It may not come as that much of a surprise that the study of L1 influence so far has primarily focused on English as a target language. English is after all one of the world’s most commonly taught languages. Shifting toward a typologically different and morphologically rich target language like Finnish may however lead to valuable and unexpected insights into the ways in which L1 influence can manifest itself in foreign language learning. In this respect, Kaivapalu’s study (2005) is to be taken as example. In her well-designed study on the inflection of Finnish nominals, Kaivapalu also drew a comparison between learners from a closely related L1 background (Estonian) and a non-related L1 background (Russian). Because of the morphological similarities between Finnish and Estonian, the Estonian learners not only significantly outperformed their Russian peers, but also often managed to successfully draw upon L1 inflectional patterns. On the basis of these findings, Kaivapalu concluded that the influence of L1 inflectional morphology was considerably stronger and more positive than previously assumed.

Rather than on nominal morphology, the focus of the present study is on morphosyntax. In Finnish, the partitive is namely used as one of the cases of the object, existential subject and predicative. The use of the Finnish partitive case was chosen as the object of study for a number of pedagogical reasons. Although the partitive is one of the most frequently used cases in Finnish, it has often been reported that the use of the partitive case remains a constant struggle for learners of Finnish. In my previous work on writing development in Finnish learner language (cf. Spoelman & Verspoor, 2010), the partitive was also found to be a notoriously troublesome case. However, despite a couple of descriptive studies on the use of the partitive case motivated by pedagogical concerns (Denison,
1957; Schot-Saikku, 1990), a set of pedagogical articles based on teaching experiences and some small-scale studies on learners' use of partitive objects in particular, there is basically a dearth of empirical research on the use of the partitive case by large groups of learners of Finnish from different L1 backgrounds.

The present study was conducted within the framework of the research project 'Corpus study on language-specific and universal features in learner language' of which the ultimate goal is to develop a corpus of written Finnish learner language. The compilation of this International Corpus of Learner Finnish (ICLFI) was initiated in 2007. The Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the ICLFI provided the research materials to systematically investigate the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in university students of Finnish as a foreign language. By analyzing language samples produced by learners from related and non-related L1 backgrounds, it is aimed to identify and address common characteristics in the learners' use of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicative as well as specific patterns of use, overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative. Central to the investigation is not only the influence of the first language on the learning of the target language (L1 influence) but also the characteristics of the target language itself. The research materials were aligned to the proficiency scales of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR) in order to also explore the relationship between L2 proficiency and the learners' use of the partitive case. Implications for the teaching of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives to university students of Finnish as a foreign language from different L1 backgrounds will be derived from the theoretical insights to which the outcomes of the learner corpus study will lead.

In order to identify and address the role of prior linguistic knowledge of the L1 and the target language, the systematic analysis of learner corpus data is combined with traditional contrastive analysis. This method of study, introduced by Gilquin (2000/2001) and referred to by the term Integrated Contrastive Analysis, involves contrastive data to formulate general predictions as well as to evaluate the findings of the learner corpus analyses. This two-fold way of combining contrastive data and learner corpus data is also found to be reflected in the general structure of this dissertation. Chapter 2 puts the partitive case in perspective and outlines the similarities and differences between the Finnish object, subject and predicative case alternations as well as the similarities and differences between the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in
Finnish and Estonian. Chapter 3 deals with the use of prior linguistic knowledge in foreign language learning and the study of L1 influence. As it approaches L1 influence as a cognitive phenomenon emerging from the L1-L2 similarities learners assume or perceive to exist, the presence of objective L1-L2 similarities is acknowledged as providing the opportunity for L1 influence to occur. The methodological framework is provided in chapter 4, after which the outcomes of the learner corpus study will be presented. Partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives all cover their own part of the result section. Each of these nevertheless follows the same structure in that the findings of a general frequency-error analysis are elaborated on by more detailed error analyses before the findings are checked against contrastive data. The final chapter discusses the outcomes presented in the chapter 5 in terms of their general theoretical and pedagogical relevance.
2 The partitive case: A special case

2.1 Introduction

After providing a brief introduction to the Finnish, Estonian, German and Dutch languages with special reference on nominal declination, this chapter will proceed with a description of the Finnish partitive case as well as with a contrastive analysis of the use of the partitive case in Finnish and Estonian. The chapter is not only intended to provide an overview of the Finnish partitive case and to illuminate L1-L2 similarities and differences but also to serve as a reference for readers who are not familiar with the partitive case, the Finnish language or one of the other languages involved. Most importantly, the content of this chapter provides the contrastive data needed for the integrated contrastive learner corpus analysis.

2.2 The system of case-marking

Case can broadly be defined as a system which marks the relationship between words in a sentence (Butt, 2006). The term case is not only used to refer to the inflectional category-system itself but also to the individual inflectional categories or values of that system (Haspelmath, 2009: 505). The function of case is to mark the relationship of a noun to a verb at the clause level and of a noun to another noun or adposition at the phrase level. The distinction between a case ending and a case form is that the former is a suffix and the latter a complete word. Case forms can accordingly be obtained by adding a case ending to a lexeme. The set of case forms in which a lexeme can appear is called a case paradigm (Blake, 2001: 1–2). In this respect, the Finnish language can thus be said to have case (a case system) and fifteen morphological cases (case endings).

Case theories generally distinguish between morphological case on the basis of the morphological realization of case endings and abstract case on the basis of their underlying functions, and generally emphasize the one over the other. This dissertation supports the position taken by Kiparsky (2001) that morphological and abstract case should ideally be treated as integrated concepts, because case-marking generally depends on a complex interplay between morphosyntax and semantics.
The inherent relatedness between form and function particularly becomes obvious when making a further distinction between the cases themselves and the relations they indicate: Cases can either indirectly or directly refer to semantic roles. Cases referring to the subject or object of a sentence indicate syntactic relations, but they indirectly relate to semantic roles such as agent, patient and theme. Where cases are not subsumed by a syntactic relation, they directly refer to semantic roles (e.g., location or source). Accordingly, case theories generally distinguish between two types of morphological cases, grammatical and semantic cases (Blake, 2001: 3). Across languages, there are cases that do not nicely fit into the general classification of grammatical and semantic cases. The partitive case is an excellent example of a grammatical case that is semantically conditioned (Kiparsky, 1998). Furthermore, it is important to note that few if any languages show a one-to-one-mapping between cases and semantic roles (Haspelmath, 2009: 506).

2.2.1 The Finnish and Estonian case systems

Finnish is a synthetic language of the agglutinating type, so its inflections are numerous and in most cases phonologically distinct (Holmberg & Nikanne, 1993). Finnish is therefore particularly well known for its rich and complex morphology. It basically combines a complex inflectional system with both highly productive derivation and compounding principles. The same holds true for the very closely related Estonian language, but Estonian is typologically more fusional and analytic than Finnish (Erelt, 2003: 7).

Neither Finnish nor Estonian has grammatical gender or articles. Nominals, (i.e. nouns, adjectives, numerals and pronouns) are in both languages inflected for number and case (Viitso, 2003). The Finnish nominal case system comprises fifteen cases (ISK, 2004: §81) and is traditionally taken to consist of two types of cases: structural and semantic cases. Nominative, genitive, partitive and accusative constitute the category of structural (or grammatical) cases. The semantic cases are divided into locative and marginal cases. Locative cases are subdivided into internal locative cases, external locative cases and general locative cases (Nikanne, 1993). The marginal cases (abessive, instructive and comitative) are rare; the instructive and comitative appear mainly in fixed expressions and idioms (Karlsson, 1999).

Estonian has fourteen nominal cases (Remes, 1983; Remes, 1995; Viitso, 2003). Like the Finnish nominal cases, the Estonian cases are divided into
structural and semantic cases. Nominative, genitive and partitive constitute the structural cases of Estonian. The remaining Estonian cases are taken to be semantic cases. Illative, inessive and elative constitute the internal locative cases, while the external locative case system comprises the allative, adessive and ablative (Viitso, 2003). Table 1 provides an overview of the nominal case systems of Finnish and Estonian.

Table 1. The nominal case systems of Finnish and Estonian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish nominal case system</th>
<th>Estonian nominal case system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>Suffix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical</td>
<td>Nominative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semantic</td>
<td>Inessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Illative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ablative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Essive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Translative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comitative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

V - vowel  
— - the case form does not have a morphological suffix  
Ø - the case form is unmarked  
A - a/ä (vowel harmony)

As illustrated by table 1, the case systems of Finnish and Estonian are similar to a large extent. Finnish and Estonian do not only have many common case forms, but also the phonological differences between the Finnish and Estonian case endings appear to be marginal. Another common characteristic of the Finnish and
Estonian declensional systems is that the same case endings are generally used in both singular and plural. Moreover, the same cases (genitive, illative and to a certain extent also the partitive) do not follow the principle of using the same case endings in singular and plural (Remes, 1995: 103). These divergent plural case endings are however not represented in table 1. The formation of partitive plural forms is particularly complex in both Finnish and in Estonian. In her research on Finnish nominal inflection as a learning target, Martin (1995) described the formation of partitive plural forms as being subject to a complex interplay between the plural marker and the noun stem on the one hand and between the plural marker and the partitive case ending on the other hand.

The most striking differences between the nominal case systems of the two languages are that the Estonian case system lacks instructive case and an equivalent to the Finnish -t ending accusative, while the Finnish case system does not contain a terminative case. In Estonian, the lack of the accusative case can be explained on the basis of a phonological change resulting in the morphological merge of the original accusative with the genitive (Remes, 2009). In modern Finnish, distinctive accusative case endings only still exist for the personal pronouns and the interrogative pronoun kuka (‘who’), and therefore the accusative continues to be acknowledged as a separate case in Finnish (ISK, 2004: §81; §1226). Those who are not familiar with Finnic languages should hereby note that the Finnish accusative can by no means be related to the direct object in the same straightforward manner as it can be done in Indo-European languages. While the accusative is in many Indo-European languages the only case of the direct object, the marginal occurrence of the accusative case ending in Finnish and its absence from Estonian already imply that this does not hold true for Finnic languages. This matter (and related terminology issues) will thoroughly be discussed in the sections 2.3.3. and 2.4.1. on the Finnish and Estonian object case alternations.

### 2.2.2 The use of cases in German and Dutch

Together with Frisian and English, the German and the Dutch language constitute the West-Germanic languages (Janssens & Marynissen, 2008). Within the Germanic languages, a relatively rich case system has been preserved as opposed to for example the Romance languages, which constitute another branch of the Indo-European language family. On the basis of reconstructions, it has been suggested that the case system of early Germanic was in essence similar to that of
classical Latin. In most Germanic languages, these case systems have declined, and traces of the old case systems can nowadays only be found in some fixed or idiomatic expressions. In German, in contrast, all four cases are still in existence and productive use (Lockwood, 1982). This leads to the present state in which German can still be considered a relatively strongly inflecting language (Steiner & Teich, 2004).

German can best be described as a language with mixed case morphology, since suffixes can be found on both articles and noun stems. The German case endings (nominative, genitive, dative and accusative) are not in all forms phonologically distinct (Engels & Vikner, 2006). Particularly with respect to the case marking of nouns, German has gradually lost most of its case endings (Hentschel & Weydt, 2003). The article case paradigm is much more complete than the noun paradigm, but even the article paradigm shows considerable overlap between case endings, a feature which is also called case syncretism. As for the singular article paradigm, case syncretism is particularly found within feminine and neuter, and between masculine and neuter. The plural article system even shows syncretism within and between all genders. Likewise, considerable overlap between case endings is found in the case paradigm of personal pronouns (Burchert, De Bleser & Sonntag, 2003; Engels & Vikner, 2006). Table 2 provides an overview of the article and noun paradigm (A) and the personal pronoun paradigm (B) of Modern German. As shown in table 3, the case system of Middle Dutch was fairly similar to that of Modern German (Bennis, 2000).
Table 2. The German article and noun paradigm (A) and personal pronoun paradigm (B); based on Engels & Vikner (2006).

(A) Article and noun paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Neuter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>der/ein Berg</td>
<td>die/eine Tür</td>
<td>das/ein Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>des/eines Berg(e)s</td>
<td>der/einer Tür</td>
<td>des/eines Kind(e)s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat</td>
<td>dem/einem Berg(e)</td>
<td>der/einer Tür</td>
<td>dem/einem Kind(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc</td>
<td>den/einen Berg</td>
<td>die/eine Tür</td>
<td>das/ein Kind</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(B) Personal pronoun paradigm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Third person singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>er</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>seiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat</td>
<td>ihm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc</td>
<td>ihn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Singular declination of the masculine NP *der Mann* (German), *die man* (Middle Dutch) and *de man* (Modern Dutch) (‘the man’)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Modern German</th>
<th>Middle Dutch</th>
<th>Modern Dutch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nom</td>
<td>der/ein Mann</td>
<td>die/een man</td>
<td>de/een man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen</td>
<td>des/eines Mann(e)s</td>
<td>dies/enes man(ne)s</td>
<td>de/een man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat</td>
<td>dem/einem Mann(e)</td>
<td>dien/enen manne</td>
<td>de/een man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acc</td>
<td>den/einen Mann</td>
<td>diervenen man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike German, the Dutch language gradually lost nearly all of its morphological case distinctions (Weerman, 2003). Some of the Middle Dutch case markers, such as the genitive case ending, were replaced by a periphrastic genitive construction involving a preposition (as illustrated in table 4), while others such as the accusative case ending disappeared without being replaced by any kind of periphrastic construction. Similar deflexion processes took place in many other Germanic languages as well (Weerman & De Wit, 1999).
Table 4. The decline of the Dutch genitive (based on Weerman & De Wit, 1999): From genitive case toward periphrasis with the preposition van (‘of’).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-MODERN DUTCH</th>
<th>MODERN DUTCH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>de macht des konings</td>
<td>de macht van de koning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the power the-Gen.Sg.Masc king-Gen.Sg.Masc</td>
<td>the power of-Prep the king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘the power of the king’</td>
<td>‘the power of the king’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liefde ener moeder</td>
<td>liefde van een moeder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the love a-Gen.Sg.Fem mother(Gen.Sg.Fem)</td>
<td>the love of-Prep a mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘a mother’s love ~ love of a mother’</td>
<td>‘a mother’s love ~ love of a mother’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Modern Dutch, case distinctions have nevertheless been preserved in some idiomatic constructions (cf. Bennis, 2000; Weerman, 2003), and like in many other languages that underwent a process of deflexion, certain case distinctions are still present in the pronominal paradigm (Weerman, 2003). The pronominal paradigm of Modern Dutch namely contains personal pronouns that differ in form from those pronouns appearing in subject position (Weerman & Evers-Vermeul, 2002). Nominative is used when the pronoun appears in subject position, while elsewhere (i.e. in direct objects, indirect objects and the objects of prepositions) the non-nominative is used (Hoeksema, 2000). The Dutch pronominal system thus discriminates between nominative personal pronouns on the one hand and non-nominative personal pronouns on the other hand (Bennis, 2000). An overview of the Modern Dutch personal pronoun paradigm is provided in table 5.

In summary, it can be stated that Dutch does not have a rich morphological case system. Modern Dutch only distinguishes between nominative and non-nominative personal pronouns. Moreover, the partitive case is an unknown phenomenon in the Dutch language (Hoeksema, 2000). Below it will however be outlined that certain partitive-like features can be detected in Dutch as well as in German.
Table 5. Personal pronouns in Modern Dutch.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Nominative (subject position)</th>
<th>Non-nominative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st person singular</td>
<td>ik</td>
<td>mij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person singular</td>
<td>jij</td>
<td>jou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person singular</td>
<td>hij (masculine)</td>
<td>hem (masculine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>zij (feminine)</td>
<td>haar (feminine)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>het (neuter)</td>
<td>het (neuter)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st person plural</td>
<td>wij</td>
<td>ons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd person plural</td>
<td>jullie</td>
<td>jullie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd person plural</td>
<td>zij</td>
<td>hen / hun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.3 The absence of a morphological partitive in Germanic languages

In Germanic languages, the subject prototypically appears in nominative case. When the accusative case-ending has not disappeared from the language in question, accusative is generally the case of the direct object. The accusative case basically represents the object as neutral. In Germanic languages, the opposition of part and whole is not expressed by a morphological partitive case ending. With respect to the direct object and the existential subject, the absence of a morphological partitive case is in certain contexts compensated by the use of the genitive in partitive function. The use of the genitive in partitive function is usually referred to by the term partitive genitive (Matthews, 1952). The partitive genitive construction is illustrated in (1) by means of parallel Bible verses. In the German and Dutch sentences, the partitive genitive (ending in -s) is used as the case of the indefinite subject. The genitive case ending is, in contrast, not present in the English equivalent translation.

(1) Ecclesiastes 1: 9b

German        Und es gibt nichts neues unter der Sonne.
               (Luther Übersetzung, 1912)

Dutch         Er is niets nieuws onder de zon.
               (Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling)

English       And there is nothing new under the sun.
               (New King James Version)
Analogously to the partitive genitive as the case of the indefinite subject, the construction was in old German and Dutch texts also used to refer to indefinite objects. In the light of the decline of cases in most Germanic languages, the partitive genitive object became in the course of history to an increasing extent replaced by a periphrastic construction starting with a preposition (cf. (2); Matthews, 1952). Modern German, Dutch and English generally use an indefinite adjective to make the indefiniteness of the object explicit (e.g. ‘to eat some bread’ vs. ‘to eat bread’).

(2) Genesis 9: 21a

German  Und er trank von dem Wein.  
(Luther Übersetzung, 1984).

Dutch  Hij dronk van de wijn.  
(Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling)

English  And he drank of the wine.  
(King James Version)

Germanic constructions involving partitive genitives merely cover one of the functions of the Finnic partitive case, that is, the quantitative unboundedness of the noun phrase. Nevertheless, the Germanic partitive genitive construction exactly captures the transition toward the historical development of the Finnic partitive case from a locative case with separative (‘from’) meaning into a semantically conditioned grammatical case covering a wide range of functions. All of this will be discussed in the following section.

2.3 The Finnish partitive case

2.3.1 The history of the term partitive

The term partitive is used for a very special case in Finnish, and has not been found useful for other languages (Haspelmath, 2009). The term partitive is derived from the Latin word pars (gen. partis), which means ‘part’. While partitive attributes such as viimeinen päivä joulukuuta (‘the last day of December’) or osa arkea (‘part of everyday life’) clearly refer to partiality, sentences such as tarvitisen autoa (‘I need a car’) do not. As a result of not
covering all functions of the partitive case, the term *partitive* can actually be very misleading (Koptjevskaja-Tamm, 2001: 526; ISK, 2004: §1226). However, it was not until the mid-1850s that the term *partitive* (*partitiivi* in Finnish) was introduced in the Finnish grammars (Schot-Saikku, 1990: 3). In the first descriptions of the Finnish language and grammar system, the partitive suffix was not even treated as a separate case.

The first description of the Finnish grammar system was written by Aeschillus Petraeus in 1649. Petraeus’ *Linguae Finnicae brevis institution* (‘short foundation of the Finnish language’) found his successor in the *Hodegus Finnicus* (‘guide into Finnish’) completed by Matthias Martinius in 1689. Both Petraeus (1648) and Martinius (1689) categorized the Finnish case endings according to the case forms of the Latin declensional system, which consisted of a nominative, genitive, dative, vocative and ablative case. In their grammars, the Finnish ablative case comprises for instance four different case endings, namely those of the present inessive, elative, allative and ablative. Petraeus and Martinius both made the observations that the genitive and accusative singular had similar endings, but that the accusative singular also comprised an additional ending (e.g. gen sg: *miehe*-n vs. acc sg: *miehe*-n/*mies*-tä), and that the nominative and accusative plural both had two similar case endings (e.g. nom/acc pl: *miehet/miehiä*). Thus, Petraeus and Martinius did not distinguish a separate partitive case form, but they categorized the case ending of partitive singular as an alternative ending of the accusative, and the case ending of partitive plural as an alternative ending of both nominative and accusative plural.

In contrast to his predecessors, Bartholdus Vhael (1733) divided the Finnish case system into fourteen cases, each with their own case ending. Vhael observed that the accusative case had always two counterparts, namely a partial accusative (*accusativus partiale*: *hän söi leipää* ‘he ate bread’) and a total accusative (*accusativus totale*: *hän söi leivän* ‘he ate the bread’). He also noted that the *totalis* and the genitive had similar endings in singular, that the *totalis* and the nominative had similar endings in plural, but that the *partialis* always had a different ending. So although Vhael did not classify the partitive as a separate case form, he did categorize the partitive suffix as a separate subcategory of the accusative case, i.e. *accusativus partiale* (Vanha Kieliopimme, 1968).

During the first half of the 19th century, the partitive case form was first treated as a separate case form, although initially called *quantitivus* and *infinitivus*, respectively. In his dissertation *Dissertatio academica de signis relationum nomi-nalium in lingua Fennica* (‘Academic dissertation on the
characteristics of nominal relations in Finnish’), Gustaf Renvall (1815) addressed the partitive case as *quantitivus* (Renvall, 1815: 10). Renvall described that one of the functions of the *quantitivus* is to express partial subjects and objects, as opposed to total subjects and objects, and he was also the first to describe the partitive of negation: “In negativo, enim Quantitivus Objectum & totale & partiale exhibit, e.c. *ei hän ota leipää* (totale & partiale)” (‘In negative sentences, the Quantitativus signifies both the total and the partial object, e.g. *ei hän ota leipää* (totale ~ partiale: ‘he does not take bread ~ he does not take the bread’) (Renvall, 1815: 17–19).

In 1824, however, Reinhold von Becker again introduced a novel term for the case, namely *infinitivus casus*, a term referring to the notion of unboundedness, as name for the partitive case suffix. *Infinitivus casus* can best be translated from Latin as ‘boundless case; case without bounds’. Von Becker seems to have adopted the term *infinitivus casus* from one of his professors, a certain professor Palander: “Benamningen af Infinitivus casus tillhör framledne Professoren Palander” (‘The name of the Infinitivus casus belongs the late Professor Palander’) (Von Becker, 1824: 23). Subsequently, the term *infinitivus* was adopted by Renvall (1840), who also observed that the Finnish object alternated between three different object cases: the nominative, genitive and infinitive, covering the opposition between *totalis* vs. *partialis* and definite vs. indefinite (Renvall, 1840: 49).

However, the term *infinitivus* did not become a well-established designation of the partitive case form. When in the mid-1850s the first grammars written in Finnish started to appear, grammarians introduced Finnish counterparts of the Latin case names. The Finnish name for the partitive case, as for example used by Gustavus Erik Euren in his *Suomalainen kielioppi suomalaisille* (‘Finnish grammar for Finns’) first published in 1852, was *osanto* (Éuren, 1866: 42). The terms *osanto* and *partitive* are semantically close to each other if not equivalent, since the Finnish term has been derived from the Finnish word *osa*, which means ‘part’.

Yrjö Koskinen was one of the first grammarians to introduce the term *Kasus partitivus*. In his *Finska Språkets Satslära* (‘Syntax of the Finnish language’), published in 1860, Koskinen adopted the Latin case names used by his predecessors, except for the term *Infinitivus*. Koskinen defined the primary function of the partitive case in the following manner: “The *kasus partitivus* most generally denotes an indefinite whole of which a part is involved” (Koskinen, 1860: 24).
Both Koskinen’s categorization of the Finnish declinational system and his definition of the partitive case were adopted by many of his successors (e.g. Setälä, 1926: 50; cf. Schot-Saikku, 1990: 3–4). As a consequence, there has long been a widespread belief among Finns that the most characteristic and most frequent usage of the partitive case relates to partiality, while the ability of the case to express aspectual unboundedness is of substantial, if not equal, importance as well (Denison, 1957: 258).

2.3.2 The historical development of the Finnish partitive case

In the history of the Finnish language, there can scarcely have been a more productive suffix than the partitive case ending (Denison, 1957: 258). From origin, the partitive case was a spatial case with separative (“from”) meaning (Kiparsky, 1998; ISK, 2004: §1226). In modern Finnish, the separative function of the case can still be observed from certain particles (Häkkinen, 2002: 78). As illustrated in table 6, the particles that can be traced back to the original separative locative case are certain postpositions and locative adverbs (ISK, 2004: §1226).

However, the modern Finnish partitive case is not a separative case anymore, although it is extraordinarily difficult to precisely define its function (Häkkinen, 2002: 78). The primary function of the partitive case can probably best be described as an object, predicative and subject case that is used to express unboundedness, i.e. unknown identities, partialness and irresultative actions (ISK, 2004; Kiparsky, 2005). The Finnish partitive case has thus developed from a general spatial case into a case expressing more abstract syntactical relationships (Denison, 1957: 257).
Table 6. Finnish particles bearing the original separative meaning of the partitive case; based on Setälä (1926: 48); Hakulinen (1968); Häkkinen (2002: 78) and ISK (2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particle</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kotoa</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>luota</td>
<td>postposition</td>
<td>from (heidän luotaan ‘from their place’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>takaa</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from beyond, from across, from behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulkoa</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from [the] outside, from abroad; by heart, from memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alta</td>
<td>postposition</td>
<td>from under, from below, from beneath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yltä</td>
<td>postposition</td>
<td>from above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaukaa</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from far, mile off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kauempaa</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from further off, from farther off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sisempää</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulomppa</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from outer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>täältä</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sieltä</td>
<td>adverb</td>
<td>from there; thence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The development of the partitive case from a locative case with separative meaning into one of the grammatical cases used in subjects, objects and predicatives has been one of the most widespread and radical changes that have taken place within Finnic languages (T. Itkonen, 1982: 429). However, this process has gone further in Finnish than in any of the other Finnic languages, which can for example be seen from the emergence of partitive distributive predicatives in Finnish, a partitive function shared by none of the other Finnic languages (Denison, 1957: 257). Remarkably, the partitive case ending phonologically eroded in the course of its grammaticalization process, which took place during late proto-Finnic. In certain morpho-phonological contexts, the -tA of the original -*tA ending changed into the dental spirant -δ-. Later on, the dental spirant was deleted. Because of this phonological change, the partitive became more similar to the grammatical cases and more distant from the local cases. Finnish local cases namely generally add an extra syllable to the word, while the case endings of the grammatical cases do not.

In this respect, the modern Finnish partitive case can be taken to morphologically represent a case in between the grammatical and the locative cases, since it sometimes does and sometimes does not add an extra syllable. More specifically, the modern Finnish partitive case ending -tA naturally adds a syllable (e.g. puu-*ta), while the ending -A may either add a syllable (e.g. la-*) or lead to lengthening of the vowel (e.g. ka-lau) (cf. Helaavuo, 1996b: 15–16).
The Uralic declinational system

The Uralic protolanguage is a reconstructed language which is taken to be the predecessor of the Finno-Ugrian and Samoyedic languages (Salminen, 2007). Based on reconstructions, it is generally assumed that the declinational system of the Uralic protolanguage comprised three grammatical cases as well as three locative cases (Helasvuo, 1996b). Nominative, genitive and accusative were the grammatical cases of Uralic, while the locative system consisted of a locative, separative and lative case (Kangasmäki-Minn, 1984a). The locative cases of Uralic were classified as general locative cases. The locative was a static case, while the separative and lative were dynamic cases, respectively designating direction from and direction to a place (Häkkinen, 2002: 77).

Table 7 shows that all case endings of modern Finnish have been derived from the Uralic cases. As a consequence of the change of the accusative ending from -*m into -n, the genitive and the accusative have been morphologically assimilated. (Kangasmäki-Minn, 1984a). The partitive case ending -*tA is similar to the case ending of the proto-Uralic *-tA separative. The present partitive case ending -A can also be traced back to the separative case ending, because the -A case endings result from a phonological change: kala-a < *kala-Δa < *kala-ta (Häkkinen, 2002: 78; Helasvuo, 1996b: 15–16).

Although the original case endings -*nA and -*tA both have been preserved in the modern Finnish essive and partitive case, the functions of the suffixes in question have quite drastically changed (Kangasmäki-Minn, 1984). The essive, which is still a locative case, has gradually developed into a case expressing abstract rather than concrete locative meaning (Helasvuo, 1996b: 12). Yet, the separative suffix has nearly completely lost all of its locative functions and split off from the local case system in order to become a grammatical case (Kangasmäki-Minn, 1984a).

As a consequence of the initialization of the grammaticalization process of the partitive case, a renewed locative case system gradually emerged. These secondary locative cases are often assumed to have been compounded of the Uralic lative endings (-*k, -*s or -*l) and the remaining Uralic locative case endings (Denison, 1957: 257). There is however not a general consensus on this issue. As specifically for the modern Finnish adessive, ablative and allative locative cases, these are for example alternatively assumed to have been compounded of the nominal derivational suffix -lA and the original Uralic locative case endings (e.g. Setälä, 1890) or suggested to have been developed
from semantically similar postpositions (cf. Aikio & Ylikoski, 2007). Regardless of its precise origin, the renewed locative case system has provided the means to express locative meanings in a more sophisticated way than before, because it contains both internal and external locative cases (Häkkinen, 2002: 77).

Table 7. The case systems of the Uralic protolanguage and modern Finnish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Uralic case system</th>
<th>Case system of modern Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical cases</td>
<td>Reconstructed ending</td>
<td>Grammatical cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominative</td>
<td>*Ø</td>
<td>nominative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>*n</td>
<td>genitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accusative</td>
<td>*m</td>
<td>partitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locative</td>
<td>*nA</td>
<td>accusative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separative</td>
<td>*tA</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lative</td>
<td>*k, s, l</td>
<td>locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locative cases</td>
<td></td>
<td>translative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>inessive</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>elative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>illative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>adessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ablative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>allative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - reconstructed ending  
Ø - unmarked case form  
A - a/a (vowel harmony)

The grammaticalization of the partitive case, as Kangasmaa-Minn (1984a) puts it, caused the whole declinational system to change: “Partitiivi on osoittautunut näytelmämme roistoksi, joka ei tiennyt paikkaansa ja sai aikaan systeemihäiriön” (‘The partitive turned out to be the bad guy of our play, the one who as a result of not knowing his place disordered the system’) (Kangasmaa-Minn, 1984a: 164).

Proposals regarding the development of the partitive case

With respect to the historical development of the partitive case it is crucial to address the question of why the partitive split off from the locative case system in order to become a grammatical case. In other words, what was it that initiated the grammaticalization process of the partitive case? In addition to the question what
caused the partitive to develop from a separative locative into a grammatical case, researchers have, in the light of the classical philosophical chicken-or-the-egg dilemma, also focused on the sequence of development, i.e. did partitive objects appear earlier than partitive subjects or predicatives, and to what extent did the different functions of the partitive case influence each other? Researchers have long struggled to find sufficient and satisfactory explanations to these questions. In the literature there is, nevertheless, no consensus on the nature of the partitive’s shift from a locative case with separative meaning into one of the grammatical cases used in objects, subjects and predicatives. Some researchers argue that influence of the Baltic languages on the Finnic languages has caused the partitive to develop into a grammatical case (e.g. Kont, 1961; 1963), whereas others suppose that the historical change of the functions of the partitive case has been a development that has taken place either in the complete absence of any external linguistic influence (e.g. T. Itkonen, 1975) or merely in the presence of some minor Baltic influence (e.g. Larjavaara, 1991). Thus, researchers are divided on the issue of whether the grammaticalization of the partitive case found its origin in its Uralic separative function itself or elsewhere as a result of language contact.

Notwithstanding the question whether internal or external influence initiated the grammaticalization of the partitive case, many researchers have argued that the expansion of the partitive case from a locative case with separative meaning into a case marking syntactic relationships started off in the object, subsequently proceeding to subjects and predicatives. This order of expansion is supported by the relative frequencies of partitive noun phrases occurring in syntactic functions observed from modern Finnish. Partitive objects namely occur most frequently, while partitive subjects occur least frequently (Helasvuo, 1996b: 9).

Kont (1961; 1963) was one of the first to argue that the partitive object emerged as a result of influence from the Baltic languages on the Finnic languages: “Võib oletada, et partitiivi osa tähistava funktsiooni välja arenemine ja süvenemine on toimunud tugeva balti mõju all” (“It can be assumed that the development and deepening of the partial function of the partitive has taken place under strong influence of Baltic”) (Kont, 1963: 50; italics mine). Kont observed conspicuous similarities between the Finnic partitive case, the Mordvinian ablative case and the Baltic genitive case, similarities that he considered to have been caused by influence from the Baltic language on the Finnic and Mordvinian languages (Kont, 1961: 199; 1963: 47–50). According to Kont, the functions of the partitive object in Finnic and the ablative case in Mordvinian, which corresponds to a large extent to the partial object in Finnish, have thus been
modelled on those of the Baltic genitive object. Kont’s view was taken over by V. Kiparsky (1969: 20–21) and Larsson (1983; 1984). In contrast to Kont, Larsson however argues that the Baltic genitive has had a more widespread influence on the Finnic partitive than its influence on the object alternation or partial function of the partitive case only (Larsson, 1984: 140–144).

On the other hand, some researchers argue that the development of partitive objects, as well as partitive subjects and predicatives is traceable back to the Uralic separative suffix -*tA; as Denison strongly (1957) puts it: “It is remarkable that all of these functions should have emerged from the primary ablative meaning of the Uralic suffix, yet this is undoubtedly so” (Denison, 1957: 257; italics mine). These researchers thus consider the grammaticalization of the partitive case as a development that took place in absence of external linguistic contacts. T. Itkonen (1976) for example proposes that the similarities between sentences containing partitive objects, subjects and predicatives result from congruence in their historical development. However, Itkonen claims that it is virtually impossible to find a single algorithm explaining how partitive objects, subjects and predicatives developed from the same source, at the same time taking into account the semantic similarities between partitive objects and partitive subjects on the one hand, and partitive subjects and partitive predicatives on the other hand. Therefore, he argues that it could also have been a complex interaction that has caused the similarities between partitive objects, subjects and predicatives, without the sentence types being straightforwardly derived from each other (T. Itkonen, 1976: 213).

In the following, some possible explanations to the development of subsequently partitive objects, aspectual objects in particular, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives are sketched in order to illustrate the myriad of functions that come together in the modern Finnish partitive case and the paths of development these functions may have followed.

The development of partitive objects denoting unbounded entities

Taking the original separative meaning as a starting point, L. Hakulinen (1968) argues that partitive objects straightforwardly developed out of adverbials, a development he dates back to late proto-Finnic (L. Hakulinen, 1968: 429). Hakulinen parallels the historical development of the Finnish partitive case to the historical development of the partial construction in French. In the French partial construction, the preposition de namely developed from an elative adverb into a
marker of partial objects: *J’ai mangé du poisson* (‘I ate (some) fish’; *du* is a contraction between the preposition *de* and the definite article *le*). Likewise, L. Hakulinen assumes that Finnish sentences like *Söin kalaa* (‘I ate fish’) were initially also interpreted in an adverbial way, later on developing into a partial object. For both the Finnish and the French sentence, the initial separative interpretation may have corresponded to the sentence ‘I ate from the fish’.

Since the accusative already had established object functions, L. Hakulinen sees it as a logical development that the partitive initially only adopted the partial object function, a secondary object function which was close to the original separative meaning of the partitive case. Subsequently, the partitive object gradually expanded, replacing the accusative in some of its other functions as well, until the only remaining accusative function was that of the total object. The partitive started to express more nuanced functions that were not directly related to the partialness of the object, i.e. progressive and irresultative aspect. Later on, also the partitive of negation started to develop. As a result, sentences with a negative interpretation started to take partitive objects even if the affirmative equivalent of the sentence was aspectually bounded. L. Hakulinen also considers this a logical development, because negative sentences express actions that are by definition irresultative as the action never takes place (L. Hakulinen, 1968: 429–439).

For his description of the historical development of partitive objects, E. Itkonen (1972) takes more or less the same starting point as L. Hakulinen. E. Itkonen nevertheless provides an explanation which is far more elaborate and also based on reconstructions and other linguistic data. E. Itkonen (1972) analyzed the development and expansion of the Uralic separative suffix from the perspective of the Volga-Finnic languages. Because the original Uralic -[*tA*] suffix is used in the Mordvinian, Finnic and Sámi languages, E. Itkonen states that the suffix was undoubtly part of the declinational system of the Volga-Finnic protolanguage and that, as a result, the Mordvinian ablative and the Finnic partitive were derived from the separative suffix. Since in Mordvinian the ablative is used as one of the object cases and in Finnic and Sámi the partitive is at least to some extent used as an object case, E. Itkonen takes it to be self-evident that the development of the -[*tA*] suffix from a locative case into a grammatical case expressing partial objects already started in the Volga-Finnic period.

E. Itkonen claims that the expansion of the object function of the partitive case particularly started off in certain verbs. This specific collection of verbs comprised those verbs from which the object function could be straightforwardly
derived on the basis of the original meaning of the separative case. This collection of verbs specifically indicated some kind of separation. They involved either the literally taking away of something, the willingness to take something away or concrete or abstract withdrawal (e.g. ‘to eat’, ‘to take’, ‘to wish’, ‘to draw back from someone’, ‘to flee for someone’, ‘to be afraid of someone’, ‘to be ashamed of someone’). E. Itkonen’s claim is supported by data from the Mordvinian languages, in which equivalents of these verbs take ablative case, the presupposed counterpart of the Finnic partitive case.

According to E. Itkonen, the partial affectedness of the object could thus initially only be expressed by using one of these specific verbs listed above, and it was this collection of verbs that triggered the development of the Volga-Finnic object system and made the partial object gradually spread out more widely. In the light of this explanation, the development of the object in Sámi has been the most problematic (cf. E. Itkonen, 189–213). Furthermore, the development of the Mordvinian ablative from the Uralic separative into an object case seemed to have been stagnated after the spread of the ablative object to those verbs expressing a specific meaning related to the original meaning of the separative case. Simultaneously, the ablative went to some extent back to its original separative meaning. As opposed to Mordvinian, however, a more profound and extensive reorganisation of the object system took place in Finnic. The distinction between indefinite and definite objects that already existed in Uralic has been preserved, but changed substantially. The partitive case entered the object system. From the small number of verbs that already took a partitive object in Volga-Finnic, the partitive spread out to the objects of all transitive verbs. Thus, the partitive took over the function of expressing indefinite objects from the nominative. As a result, the nominative started to express definite objects, alongside with its former counterpart, the accusative case. Also in plural, the partitive started to express indefinite objects. The most peculiar outcome of the reorganization process of the object case system has been the development of the aspectual object, a development that does not find its equivalent in other Finno-Ugric languages (E. Itkonen, 1972: 187–188).

The development of partitive objects denoting aspectual unboundedness

The historical development of the Finnish aspectual object was described in detail by Larjavaara (1991). With respect to his description of the history of aspectual object, Larjavaara takes the possible relationship between quantification and
aspect into consideration. As quantification (the attribute function of the partitive, as in *kaksi poikaa* ‘two boys’) has an earlier origin than the aspectual object, Larjavaara argues that the latter phenomenon has developed out of the former. In this manner, Larjavaara elaborates each stage in the development of the aspectual object arguing that the aspectual object and the object case alternation in Finnish have developed in a logical manner, which can be well motivated on semantic grounds.

In line with other researchers, Larjavaara assumes that the Uralic separative case formed the starting point for the development of the aspectual object. Reconstructions have namely suggested that, from the Finno-Mordvinian period onward, the separative case was already used as a primitive partial object case for some verbs (e.g. *juoda* ‘to drink’) as well as to express subject and object quantification. Larjavaara claims that during the following stage of development modest influence of the Baltic languages gave rise to the further expansion of the primitive partial object eventually resulting in a part versus whole opposition. During the next stage of development, the partitive case gradually became a marker of imperfective aspect in sentences with a resultative verb and a partial object. This particular stage of development is taken to be the starting point of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Partitive function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1.    | separative function | Lähdin *kotona* aikaisin.  
leave-Past.1Sg from-home-Adv early-Adv  
‘I left home early.’ |
| 2a.   | attributive function of the partitive case | Minulla on [kaksi] *lasta*.  
l-Adess.Sg be-3Sg two(Nom) child-Part.Sg  
‘I have two children’ |
| 2b.   | primitive partial object function | Jöin *vetä*.  
drink-Past.1Sg water-Part.Sg  
‘I drank (some) water.’ |
| 3.    | partial object function | Rakensin *taloa*.  
build-Past.1Sg house-Part.Sg  
‘I was building the house (part of it).’ |
| 4.    | marker of imperfective aspect in sentences with a resultative verb and a partial object | Löysin *vetä*.  
find-Past.1Sg water-Part.Sg  
‘I found (some) water.’ |
| 5.    | marker of imperfective aspect in sentences with a resultative verb and an unaffected object | Ammuin *järistä*.  
l(Nom) shot-Past.1Sg hare-Part.Sg  
‘I shot at the hare (but I did not kill it).’ |
grammaticalization of aspect. Later on, the aspectual partitive also spread out to resultative verbs in which the scope of the object was not affected. As a result of the expansion of grammatical aspect to all resultative verbs, the objects of irresultative verbs subsequently became marked with partitive case. The emergence of the partitive of negation is assumed to have formed the final stage in the development of the Finnish object, a development which to some extent may have taken place under the influence of a Baltic equivalent. Larjavaara states that it has probably not been until mid proto-Finnic that the partitive of negation expanded to all sentence types. The development of the aspectual object as proposed by Larjavaara is summarized and exemplified in table 8.

### The development of partitive subjects

In parallel with the development of partitive objects, Hakulinen (1968: 460) claims that the development of partitive subjects can be directly traced back to the original use of the partitive as a case of separation. Hakulinen sees the emergence of partitive subjects as the result of a prolonged process that probably already started in the proto-Finnic period. On the basis of the original function of the partitive case, Hakulinen assumes that partitive subjects have not been nominative from origin, but that they developed from adverbials. Hakulinen states that sentences like *Väkeä tulee* (‘There are people coming.’) were originally been interpreted as, as it is said in modern Finnish: *Väestä päin tulee.* (‘There is a coming from the people.’). However, Terho Itkonen (1975) argues that such a straightforward semantic development as suggested by Hakulinen would be neither natural nor would it take the possible influence of partitive objects on the origin of partitive subjects into consideration, a possible influence that T. Itkonen does take into account.

Based on reconstructions, it has been demonstrated that in early proto-Finnic the system of object case assignment in affirmative sentences was already similar to that of modern Finnish. Since Sámi and Mordvinian languages do not have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Partitive function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>marker of the object of irresultative verbs</td>
<td>Rakastan <em>sinua.</em> love-1Sg you-Part.Sg ‘I love you.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>partitive of negation</td>
<td>En saanut <em>kirjettä.</em> Neg.1Sg receive-Past participle letter-Part.Sg ‘I did not receive the letter.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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37
partitive subjects, the emergence of the partitive subject can, however, not be traced back to early proto-Finnic. Therefore, T. Itkonen (1975) argues that the existence of partitive objects versus the absence of partitive subjects caused an asymmetry in early proto-Finnic, which was probably the most visible in intransitive-transitive sentence pairs with similar meaning and form, as illustrated in table 9. From this table, it can be inferred that indefinite objects were already during early proto-Finnic assumed to be expressed by partitive objects, whereas indefinite subjects did not yet appear in partitive case (but still in nominative case). As a consequence, nominative subjects could either refer to definite or to indefinite entities.

According to T. Itkonen, this asymmetry triggered the development of partitive subjects, resulting in the emergence of partitive subjects in sentences with a transitive counterpart. However, T. Itkonen acknowledges that this development does not cover all different usages of the partitive subject, since the partitive subject also spread to intransitive sentences not being part of a transitive-intransitive sentence pair with similar meaning and form. The most frequently occurring sentence type which involves partitive subjects, i.e. sentences having olla (‘to be’) as their predicate, also belong to the latter category. T. Itkonen proposes that the spread of partitive subjects from sentences having a transitive counterpart to sentences not being part of a transitive-intransitive sentence pair possibly results from an analogous development, triggered by a certain commonality between sentences with and without transitive counterparts. This commonality probably resides in that both sentence types (i.e. with and without transitive counterparts) were perceived as semantically similar.
Table 9. The object-subject asymmetry in early proto-Finnic as proposed by T. Itkonen (1975): The presence of partitive objects versus the absence of partitive subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECT</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Definite / restrictive object</strong></td>
<td><strong>Definite ~ indefinite subject</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tauti tappoi lapsit.</td>
<td>Tautiin kuolivat lapsit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disease(Nom:Sg) kill-Past.3Sg child-Nom:Pl</td>
<td>disease-III.Sg die-Past.3Pl child-Nom:Pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'The disease killed the children.'</td>
<td>'The children died of the disease.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indefinite / partitive object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tauti tappoi lapsia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disease(Nom:Sg) kill-Past.3Sg child-Part:Pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'The disease killed children.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, T. Itkonen claims that the partitive attribute (e.g. *kaksi poikaa* ‘two boys’), which can be dated back to early proto-Finnic, also to some extent paved the way for the development of the partitive subject. Evidence for the influence of the attributive partitive on the emergence of partitive subjects can be found both from eastern Sámi and from the Finnish quantifying adverbs *paljon* (‘a lot of’) and *vähän* (‘a little’; ‘some’). The evidence from eastern Sámi that T. Itkonen uses in his argumentation was adopted from E. Itkonen (1972).

E. Itkonen (1972) describes that in eastern Sámi, the partitive in numeral construction occurs only in conjunction with cardinal numerals higher than six. In addition, these partitive attribute constructions can only occur in subject and in object position. In all other sentence positions, instead of the cardinal numeral, the noun is the head of the numeral construction (E. Itkonen, 1973: 308–316). According to T. Itkonen, the quantifiers *paljo(n)* and *vähä(n)* behave in a similar way as the cardinal numbers in eastern Sámi. As illustrated in example 3, *paljo* and *vähä* are quantifying adjectives showing case and number agreement with the head NP of the construction. *Paljo* and *vähä* can occur in all sentence positions except for the subject of the existential sentence and the direct object of the transitive sentence. Instead, the quantifying adverbs *paljon* and *vähän* co-occur with the subjects of existential sentences and the objects of transitive sentences (as illustrated by example 4).
(3) a. *Paljo lukeminen rasittaa silmiä.*
   a-lot(Nom.Sg) reading(Nom.Sg) strain-3Sg eye-Part.Pl
   ‘A lot of reading strains the eyes’

   b. *En välitä paljosta rahasta.*
   Neg-1Sg care a-lot-of-Elat.Sg money-Elat.Sg
   ‘I do not care about (having) a lot of money’
   (T. Itkonen, 1975)

(4) a. *Minulla on paljon rahaa.*
   I-Adess.Sg be-3Sg a-lot-of-Adv money-Part.Sg
   ‘I have a lot of money.’

   b. *Sain vähän rahaa.*
   get-Past.1Sg a-little-Adv money-Part.Sg
   ‘I received a little money.’

T. Itkonen claims that *paljon* and *vähän* were from origin analyzed as adverbs governing a partitive attribute. In modern Finnish, the partitives are no longer analyzed as attributes but as the subject or object of the sentence. The partitives are thus no longer assumed to be governed by the preceding quantifying adverb. This proposed development from a partitive attribute governed by *paljon* or *vähän* into an object or an existential subject co-occurring with the quantifying adverb *paljon* or *vähän* is illustrated in table 10.

| Table 10. The development of partitive subjects / objects co-occurring with the adverbs *paljon* and *vähän* (as proposed by T. Itkonen (1975)). |
|---|---|
| Adverb governing a partitive attribute | Quantifying adverb co-occurring with a partitive subject / object |
| Minulla on [paljon] rahaa. | Minulla on [paljon] [rahaa]. |
| Sain [vähän] rahaa. | Sain [vähän] [rahaa]. |
The development of partitive predicatives

In the preceding sections, an overview was given of proposals concerning the development of partitive objects and partitive subjects. This section focuses on the development of partitive predicatives in Finnish. In contrast to the development of partitive objects and partitive subjects, it is argued that the expansion of partitive predicatives has been a recent development (e.g. Sadeniemi, 1950; Denison, 1957).

The nominative predicative and the partitive of inclusion are the oldest predicative types (Sadeniemi, 1950). Traces of the partitive predicative of inclusion (as in Hän on suurta sukua ‘He comes from a noble family’) are already found in proto-Finnic. Also in Sámi, the partitive predicative of inclusion may have left traces. The partitive predicative of inclusion can, however, not be dated further back in time than the proto-Finnic period (Denison, 1957: 247). In Finnish, the distributive partitive predicative has relatively recently taken over the function of the nominative predicative in cases of a divisible referent (Sadeniemi, 1950).

The above described development is suggested and supported by linguistic data from some other Finnic languages, namely Estonian, Karelian and Veps, as well as by data from old written Finnish. In addition to Finnish, the partitive predicative of inclusion is for instance found in Estonian, Karelian and Veps, but the distributive partitive predicative is found in Finnish only. In Estonian, Karelian and Veps the distributive predicative takes nominative instead of partitive case. Example (5) shows the contrast between the Finnish distributive predicative and the use of the distributive predicative in other Finnic languages. The example was adopted from Lees’ (2007) study on the use of predicatives in Finnic and based on the most recent translations of the New Testament of the Bible. The contrast between the modern Estonian and Finnish predicative will be dealt with in detail in section 2.4.3.

(5) Matthew 4: 18

Finnish
Sillä he olivat kalastajia.
for they(Nom) be-Past.3Pl fisherman-Part.Pl

Estonian
Nad olid kalurid.
they(Nom) be-Past.3Pl fisherman-Nom.Pl
Karelian: Hüö oldih kalastajat.
they(Nom) be-Past.3Pl fisherman-Nom.Pl

Livonian: Slepierast ku ne vol’t kalamied.
because they(Nom) be-Past.3Pl fisherman-Nom.Pl

Veps: Hö oliba kalanikad.
they(Nom) be-Past.3Pl fisherman-Nom.Pl

‘(For) they were fishermen.’

With respect to the historical development of written Finnish, the period between 1540 and 1820 is called the era of Old written Finnish (Vanha kirjasuomi). In this period, the nominative distributive predicative occurred substantially more frequently than in modern Finnish and seemed to almost completely correspond to the function of the partitive distributive predicative in modern Finnish (Sadenniemi, 1950). In the second half of the 1800s, after many centuries of fairly stable and uniform usage, the partitive thus suddenly seemed to develop expansive tendencies in the Finnish predicative (Denison, 1957: 247).

Although it formerly was assumed that the proto-Finnic nominative predicative resulted from Swedish influence, Sadenniemi (1950: 52) points out that the partitive distributive predicative of modern Finnish better seems to correspond to the Swedish undetermined predicative NP than the nominative predicative does. Denison (1957: 247) pursues Sadenniemi’s observation to the conclusion that the distributive function of the predicative may be at least in part the outcome of Swedish influence. The fact that the extension in the predicative function of the partitive took place during the heydays of Finnish cultural nationalism offers support for Denison’s point of view, because in those days, more and more Swedish-speaking Finns decided to learn the Finnish language, so that there was a continuous growth in the number of Swedish-Finnish bilinguals. It seems not unlikely that these bilinguals were prone to overextend the use of the partitive case as the case of the predicative because of correspondences and similarities they observed between the Finnish predicative and the Swedish undetermined NP in other functions. Denison does, however, not suggest that there has not been any internal influence that paved the way for the development of the distributive partitive predicative, but he emphasizes that without Swedish influence the partitive would not have expanded as a case of the predicative the way it did.
Sadeniemi (1950), in contrast, addresses the development of partitive distributive predicatives as a development that mainly took place under internal influences of the Finnish language. As the starting point of the development of partitive distributive predicatives, Sadeniemi takes the original separative meaning of the partitive case. He subsequently argues that the partitive distributive predicative developed under the influence of both partitive objects and partitive subjects. In conjunction with the separative origin of the partitive case, Sadeniemi assumes that the partial object in sentences like Mies ampuu lintuja (’The man shoots birds’) initially was interpreted as ‘The man shoots a group of birds’. Sadeniemi advocates this interpretation by arguing that the sentence can basically be taken to describe a man shooting one bird after another and thus, consequently, one bird at the time. In other words, Sadeniemi thus characterizes the partial object as distributive. Likewise, he claims that in sentences containing a partitive subject, e.g. Poikia juoksee ohi (’There are some boys running by’), the partitive subject was initially interpreted as a group of boys running by, gradually shifted to a distributive reading in which the boys are running by one after another. Similarly, Sadeniemi assumes that distributive substantive predicatives like He ovat seppiä (’There are blacksmiths’) were initially interpreted in the same way as partitive predicatives, but because the referent was divisible, the divisibility spread out to the predicative as well, which as a result became marked with partitive case. Since substantive predicatives are not very distant from adjective predicatives, Sadeniemi argues that the distributive substantive predicative analogously spread out to the adjective predicative (as in modern Finnish He ovat iloisia ‘They are happy’) (Sadeniemi, 1950: 52–53).

2.3.3 Partitive objects and the Finnish object case alternation

Partitive versus restrictive objects

In Finnish, the direct object is a verb complement which can either be a partitive or a restrictive object. The term partitive object simply refers to objects marked with partitive case and is thus derived from the name of the partitive case in a very straightforward way (ISK, 2004: §925). In contrast, the term restrictive object (adopted from Huumo, 2006; 2010) is more complicated and cannot be explained from a morpho-logical point of view. Restrictive objects are also widely
referred to as total objects (cf. 2.3.1), a term which is however not entirely appropriate as it basically leaves the functions of the aspectual object out of consideration. Still, the term was decided to be maintained in the contemporary grammar of Finnish Iso Suomen Kielioippi.

In previous grammars (e.g. Karlsson, 1966; Hakulinen & Karlsson, 1979), restrictive objects were sometimes referred to as accusative objects. Lately, this term has been acknowledged not to be very appropriate, for most restrictive objects are not morphologically marked with accusative case. The restrictive object, namely, does not refer to a category of objects marked with the same case (Huumo, 2006), but to a morphologically heterogeneous and at the same time semantically uniform category of objects (Huumo, 2010). The restrictive object basically involves three different object case endings, the nominative (zero ending), the genitive (or genitive-accusative) and the accusative case (ISK, 2004: §934; cf. figure 1).

In order to distinguish between the nominative as the case of the syntactical subject or the predicative of the sentence on the one hand and as the case of the object on the other hand, the nominative has occasionnally been termed nominative-accusative when marking the object (Huumo, 2006). When marking the object, the genitive has widely been termed genitive-accusative in order to discriminate between the genitive-like accusative and the original adnominal possessive genitive (ISK, 2004: §1226). The genitive-accusative namely traces back to the historical accusative case ending, which after the phonological change of its ending from -*m to -n, morphologically merged with the genitive case ending (Hakulinen, 1968: 85). By utilizing the term restrictive object instead of the term accusative object, the function of the object is emphasized (Huumo, 2006) and at the same time the renewed term does no longer possibly lead to the erroneous interpretation that only the modern Finnish morphological accusative is concerned. For the purposes of both appropriateness and distinctness, the terms partitive object and restrictive object will be adopted in this dissertation, and the terms nominative, genitive-accusative and accusative will be used to refer to the three morphological case endings covered by the restrictive object.

The term genitive-accusative that will be used as a term does not relate to the former opposition between partitive and accusative objects but it is rather associated with the accusative history of the ending, at the same time differentiating between the original genitive case ending and the genitive-like accusative case ending on the one, and the genitive-like case ending and the morphologically distinct accusative case-endings as existing for the modern
Finnish animate pronouns (i.e. the personal pronouns and the interrogative pronoun *kuka* (‘who’)) on the other hand. Since the focus of this dissertation is on the use of the partitive case, it is more important to discuss the semantic side of the object case alternation rather than its morphosyntactic side. Therefore, the different morphological endings of the restricted object will be merely indicated in the glosses and the restricted object will further be treated as a uniform semantic category that has its counterpart in the partitive object.

**Fig. 1. Schematic overview of the object case alternation in Finnish.**

**General principles of object case-marking in Finnish**

In general, there are three conditions that influence object case marking in Finnish. At the sentence level, these are negative polarity and aspectual unboundedness. At the phrase level, the divisibility and definiteness of the object noun phrase affect the case marking of the object (Huumo, 2005; ISK, 2004: §930). In accordance with these conditions affecting object case marking, an aspectual as well as a NP-related partitive function can be distinguished (Kiparsky, 1998) and the three different types of partitives can be termed *aspectual partitive, quantificational partitive (NP-related partitive) and partitive of negation* (Kiparsky, 2005).

Although rather than interacting with each other, the different conditions of object case marking in Finnish seem to influence the case marking of the object each in their own independent way (Leino, 1991: 137), it sometimes turns out to
be difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle them. In order to provide a clear picture, each condition influencing object case marking is first discussed separately. Subsequently, the conditions will be brought together at the end of the chapter.

**Aspect**

Since aspect is an exceedingly complicated matter, it is beyond the scope of this section to present a complete overview of all issues involved in Finnish aspect. Instead, the notion of aspect will be briefly introduced and the main principles of aspectual object case marking will be outlined in order to provide general insights into aspectual case-marking in Finnish.

Both tense and aspect are concerned with time. However, tense and aspect are related to time in different ways (Comrie, 1976: 5). While tense locates an event at a particular temporal location (Rothstein, 2008), aspect is concerned with the internal temporal constituency of the situation. The aspect of a situation is basically the way in which its internal temporal constituency is viewed (Comrie, 1976: 3). Whereas the relation between tense and time is associated with situation-external factors (Kangasmaa-Minn, 1984b), the relation between aspect and time typically depends on situation-internal factors (Comrie, 1976: 5).

An essential characteristic of aspect is that it is associated with the opposition between situations with an unbounded duration on the one hand and situations with a terminated or otherwise bounded duration on the other hand (Leino, 1991: 172–178). Aspectual oppositions are marked in a myriad of different ways in different language branches and families. In Slavonic languages, aspect is overtly and morphologically marked on the verb. With few exceptions, all Russian verbs have a contrasting pair consisting of an imperfective and a perfective verb form. The imperfective expresses a progressive action, while the perfective expresses a

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1 It is not only the aspectual systems that differ from one language group to another but also the commonly used terminology. While perfective and imperfective are contrasted in descriptions of Slavonic aspect, the oppositions between *aspectually bounded* versus *aspectually unbounded*, *resultative* versus *irresultative* and *telic* versus *atelic* are commonly utilized in Finnish. Aspectual bounded- and unboundedness are mainly used while referring to aspect at the sentence-level. The oppositions between telic - atelic and resultative - irresultative are generally used when referring to verbal aspect as well as to the aspect of the sentence as a whole (Sulkala, 1996; ISK, 2004: §1500). The term *telicity* is derived from the Greek word τέλος (télos) meaning ‘end’, ‘goal’, ‘result’ or ‘completion’. The opposition of telicity thus expresses situations either with an endpoint (telic) or without an endpoint (atelic).
completed action. The perfective is generally derived from the imperfective stem by prefixation. The perfective verb form pročitala (‘she has read’) has for example been derived from the imperfective form čitala (‘she was reading’) by adding the prefix pro- to the imperfective stem. Because aspectual marking is overt and fully grammaticalized, Slavonic aspect is often taken to be a prototypical exemplar of aspectual system in general (Binninck, 1991: 136).

As in all languages, there is also a semantic aspect in Finnish and in other Finno-Ugric languages (Kangasmäa-Minn, 1984b). In Finnish, aspect is however not morphologically marked on the verb; neither is there any other systematic and straightforward syntactic or morphological marker indicating aspectual oppositions (Heinämäki, 1984: 153). Instead of marking aspectual oppositions on the verb, the aspectual interpretation of Finnish sentences relies to a large extent on nominal elements (Huumo, 2005), namely on the opposition between the partitive and restrictive object. In addition, the aspectual interpretation of a sentence partly depends on the semantics of the verb and can also be influenced by adverbials or by certain lexico-grammatical means such as derivational verbal suffixation (Sulkala, 1996). Finnish aspect is, therefore, more a sentence-level feature than a verbal feature (Sulkala, 1996; Askonen, 2001: 62).

The aspectual object case alternation

As a general principle concerning the aspectual case-marking of the object, it can be stated that the partitive object expresses aspectual unboundedness (6a), while the restrictive object indicates aspectual boundedness (6b) (ISK, 2004: §930–931). More specifically, the partitive object is associated with irresultativeness or atelicity, while the restrictive object is related to resultative or telic events, situations and actions (Leino, 1991: 137).

(6)  

(a)  Kirjoitin kirjeen.  
write-Past.1Sg letter-GenAcc.Sg
‘I wrote a/the letter ~ I finished writing a/the letter.’

(b)  Kirjoitin kirjettä.  
write-Past.1Sg letter-Part.Sg
‘I was writing a/the letter ~ I did some letter writing.’
Typically, the restrictive object refers to situations in which an accomplishment has been brought to a conclusion, whereas the partitive object either indicates ongoing processes or, alternatively, actions that have not (yet) been brought to a conclusion or endpoint (Huumo, 2005). In other words, a sentence containing a partitive object either receives a progressive reading (7a) or a reading where an on-going event has been terminated but not (yet) been completed (7b). Considering these aspectual nuances, example (7) provides a contrasting pair of sentences for which the intended reading is determined on the basis of the context. Most often it is, however, not clear from the context which of the two possible aspectually unbounded readings is actually intended.

(7) a. **Kirjoitin kirjettä kun puhelin soi.**
   write-Past.1Sg letter-Part.Sg when phone(Nom) ring.Past.3Sg
   ‘I was writing a/the letter, when the phone rang.’

b. **Kirjoitin kirjettä ennen kuin lähdin töihin.**
   write-Past.1Sg letter-Part.Sg before leave-Past.1Sg work.Ill.Sg
   ‘I did some letter writing before I went off to work.’

**Irresultative, ambivalent and resultative verbs**

Although Finnish verbs themselves do not bear any morphological features expressing aspect, verbs can be divided into different aspectual categories on the basis of the objects they generally assign. However, it must constantly be borne in mind that the aspectual interpretation of a sentence does not rely on these verb features only, but that it is all of the aspectual features of the sentence that ultimately determine the aspect of the sentence as a whole (Kangasmaa-Minn, 1978; Sulkala, 1996). Nevertheless, the classification of Finnish verbs into different aspectual categories provides a meaningful baseline for understanding the aspectual object case alternation. With respect to the aspectual object case alternation, Finnish transitive verbs can be divided into four categories: *irresultative verbs, resultative verbs, ambivalent verbs* and *quasi-resultative verbs* (Leino, 1991: 138–139). An overview of the Finnish aspectual verb categories is provided in table 11. The aspectual verb categories will further be illustrated by the examples (8)-(11). Those who are more familiar with approaches to aspect
from within the Anglo-American tradition should hereby note that some kind of connection can be drawn between the Finnish aspectual verb categories and Vendler's classification of aspect based on the \textit{time schemata} of verbs. Vendler (1957) distinguished four types of time schemata: \textit{States}, \textit{activities}, \textit{accomplishments} and \textit{achievements}, of which the latter would for example cover the category of inherently resultative verbs in table 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity verbs (ongoing)</th>
<th>AMBIVALENT</th>
<th>RESULTATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>edustaa</td>
<td>to shoot'</td>
<td>to shoot'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opiskella</td>
<td>to study'</td>
<td>to study'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jalkaa</td>
<td>to continue'</td>
<td>to continue'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarkoittaa</td>
<td>to mean'</td>
<td>to mean'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>syödä</td>
<td>to eat'</td>
<td>to eat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rakentaan</td>
<td>to build'</td>
<td>to build'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kertoa</td>
<td>to repair'</td>
<td>to repair'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pesta</td>
<td>to wash'</td>
<td>to wash'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siirtää</td>
<td>to move'</td>
<td>to move'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>valmistaa</td>
<td>to prepare'</td>
<td>to prepare'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kivetä</td>
<td>to climb'</td>
<td>to climb'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11. Overview of the Finnish aspectual verb categories (based on ISK, 2004; Vilkuna, 1996 and Huumo, 2005)

With respect to the aspectual verb categories presented in table 11, irresultative verbs are verbs that always take a partitive object in Finnish. On the basis of their semantics, two main classes of irresultative verbs can be distinguished. The first class of irresultative verbs is a group of verbs denoting ongoing activities or states (cf. (8)). State of mind verbs and verbs of emotion constitute the second mainstream of irresultative verbs. This class of verbs includes verbs of emotion as well as non-causative and causative state of mind verbs (Vilkuna, 1996: 122–123;
The morphosyntactic differences between non-causative and causative verbs are illustrated in example (9), in which the non-causative state of mind verb pelätä (‘to be afraid’) (a) is contrasted with its causative counterpart pelottaa (‘to scare’).

(8) Hän edustaa Suomea.
    s/he(Nom) represent-3Sg Finland-Part.Sg
    ‘She/he represents Finland.’

(9) a. Hän pelkäsi ajatusta.
    s/he(Nom) be afraid-Past.3Sg idea-Part.Sg
    ‘She/he was afraid of the idea.’

b. Häntä pelotti ajatus.
    s/he-Part.Sg scare-Past.3Sg idea(Nom.Sg)
    ‘The idea scared her/him.’

Regarding the Finnish aspectual object alternation, resultative verbs typically denote resultative and aspectually bounded events that license a restrictive object in affirmative sentences (ISK, 2004: §1512). In this respect, quasi-resultative verbs constitute a separate category of resultative verbs. Although seemingly referring to an irresultative event, a feature which usually suggests the assignment of a partitive object, quasi-resultative verbs usually take a restrictive object (Leino, 1991: 138–139). Quasi-resultative verbs can be divided into verbs of perception, mental verbs and verbs of location or state (Huumo, 2005). In (10), examples are given of a sentence containing the inherently resultative punctual verb löytää (‘to find’) (a) and a sentence containing the quasi-resultative verb omistaa (‘to own’) (b).

(10) a. Löysin asunnon.
    find-Past.1Sg house-GenAcc.Sg
    ‘I found a house.’

b. Hän omistaa omakotitalon maalla.
    s/he(Nom) own-3Sg home-GenAcc.Sg country-Adess.Sg
    ‘She/he owns a home in the country side.’
The aspectual verb category of ambivalent verbs (11) is basically located in between irresultative and resultative verbs, as verbs belonging to this category take either a restrictive or a partitive object dependent on their aspectual reading. Ambivalent verbs, also called resultative-irresultative verbs, thus have two possible aspectual readings. In the case of a restrictive object, the resultative reading of the verb is selected. The assignment of a partitive object indicates the irresultative reading of the verb (ISK, 2004: §1499, §1513–1514). The aspectual object case alternation as occurring in ambivalent verbs is illustrated in (11) on the basis of the verb ampua (‘to shoot’). The verb ampua is, because of its semantics, exceedingly suitable to understand the difference between the irresultative and resultative reading of ambivalent verbs. Example (11a) illustrates the irresultative reading of the verb ampua, while (11b) exemplifies its resultative reading.

(11) a. Metsästäjä ampui jänistä.  
    hunter(Nom) shoot-Past.3Sg hare-Part.Sg  
    ‘The hunter shot at the hare.’

b. Metsästäjä ampui jäniksen.  
    hunter(Nom) shoot-Past.3Sg hare-GenAcc.Sg  
    ‘The hunter shot the hare.’

Example (11a) basically refers to a situation in which the hunter shot at the hare, but his action did not lead to a result. Although it remains unclear whether or not the hunter hit or wounded the hare, it can be derived from the sentence that the hunter did not kill the hare. In contrast, the sentence in (b) indicates the resultative reading of the verb ampua (‘to shoot’) and refers to a situation in which the hunter shot the hare and actually killed it.

Aspectually bounded versus aspectually unbounded sentences

As mentioned earlier, it is not the aspectual characteristics of the verb that ultimately determine the aspectual reading of the sentence. Regardless of the fact that an inherently resultative verb generally denotes an aspectually bounded event and assigns a restrictive object, it is namely quite common that a sentence
containing an inherently resultative verb is in fact aspectually unbounded and that, as a consequence, the verb takes a partitive object. In (12), for example, it is shown that the inherently resultative verb viedä (‘to take’, ‘to bring’) generally takes a restrictive object (a), but that there are several possible instances in which the verb assigns a partitive object as a result of the aspectual unboundedness of the sentence. The sentences in (b)-(d) are aspectually unbounded for different reasons. In (b), the sentence denotes a progressive event (in contrast to (12a)). The example sentence in (c), in turn, is aspectually unbounded because it refers to an iterative event (i.e. ‘the swimming’ took place repeatedly). In (d), the phrasal verb viedä eteenpäin (‘to carry forward’) denotes a figurative, on-going process rather than an aspectually bounded event.

(12) a. Hän vei minut lentokentälle.
s/he(Nom) take-Past.3Sg  I-Acc airport-All.Sg
‘She/he took me to the airport.’

b. Hän vei minua juuri lentokentälle.
s/he(Nom) take-Past.3Sg  I-Part just airport-All.Sg
‘She/he was just taking me to the airport.’

c. Isoäiti vei meitä aina uimaan.
grandma take-Past.3Sg we-Part always swim-3Inf.Ill
‘Grandma always took us swimming.’

d. Se vie minua eteenpäin.
it(Nom) take-3Sg  I-Part further
‘It carries me forward ~ takes me further.’

Similarly, even if a sentence contains an irresultative verb, the sentence can frequently be turned into an aspectually bounded sentence by adding an adverbial boundary to the sentence (Sulkala, 1981: 33; Heinämäki, 1994: 213–218; Vilkuna, 1996: 122–123), a principle that is illustrated in example (13). Although the inherently irresultative verb ajaa (‘to drive’) usually takes a partitive object (a), a restrictive object is assigned if the action becomes explicitly bounded either
by an adverbial of location expressing an end point (b) or by another adverbial bringing the action to a conclusion (c).

(13)  a. **Mies ajoi autoa.**

    man(Nom)  drive-Past.3Sg  car-Part.Sg

    ‘The man was driving the car.’

  b. **Mies ajoi auton parkkiin.**

    man(Nom)  drive-Past.3Sg  car-GenAcc.Sg  parking place-Ill.Sg

    ‘The man drove the car to the parking place.’

  c. **Mies ajoi auton mäsäksi.**

    man(Nom)  drive-Past.3Sg  car-GenAcc.Sg  to-pieces-Adv

    ‘The man drove the car to pieces.’

Quantitative (un)boundedness: Divisibility and definiteness

Divisibility and definiteness relate to the NP-related function of the partitive case. This quantificational function of the partitive is similar to that of the aspectual partitive in that it also involves boundedness, be it of nouns rather than of the aspectual reading of the sentence (ISK, 2004: § 1522). The quantitative boundedness of nouns is therefore also referred to by the term nominal aspect (ISK, 2004: § 556; Huumo, 2010). Before outlining the general principles of Finnish object case-marking pertaining to nominal aspect, the notion of divisibility and its relation to definiteness first need to be introduced. It basically all starts from the the fact that, like in many other languages, Finnish nouns are divided into two categories depending on whether nouns are perceived as divisible or indivisible. As a consequence, Finnish nouns are either called divisible or indivisible (ISK, 2004: § 1522).

Divisible and indivisible nouns have different properties. An indivisible noun constitutes a bounded whole which is referred to either as an individual entity (e.g. *auto* ‘car’) or as an individual entity (e.g. *nainen* ‘woman’). Indivisible nouns are also called count nouns, for they denote bounded wholes that can be counted. The indivisibility of count nouns resides in that the entities they denote cannot be divided into parts, as a part of an indivisible entity would not embody the same as...
its whole. Since indivisible nouns are countable, they can appear both in singular and in plural and they can also co-occur with cardinal numbers. Singular indivisible nouns are quantitatively bounded, which is reflected by the case assignment of indivisible objects and subjects as well as by the case assignment of predicatives predicated by subjects denoting an indivisible entity. Plural indivisible nouns are quantitatively bounded when denoting a definite set of entities but quantitatively unbounded when denoting an indefinite set of entities (ISK, 2004: § 554).

A divisible noun, on the other hand, denotes an entity consisting of multiple equivalent parts that cannot be individualized. A divisible entity is often a mass substance (e.g. 'coffee'), which is divisible in the sense that if a small part of the mass would be taken out, this part would still constitute the mass in the same way as the remaining mass does, and in the same way as each part of the mass does. The same noun is therefore used to describe each part of the mass as well as the mass as a whole. If for instance coffee is poured from a coffee can into a mug, both the coffee in the mug and the remaining coffee in the coffee can represent the substance of coffee.

In Finnish, mass nouns and abstract nouns are categorized as divisible nouns. Examples of mass nouns are vesi (‘water’), metalli (‘metal’), suklaa (‘chocolate’) and home (‘mould’). Abstract nouns are nouns denoting abstract entities, features, situations, actions, feelings and emotions such as rakkaus (‘love’), musiikki (‘music’), onnellisuus (‘happiness’), väkivalta (‘violence’) suhtautuminen (‘attitude’, literally: ‘reacting’) and syönti (‘eating’) (ISK, 2004: § 555). At first glance, the distinction between divisible and indivisible nouns in Finnish seems to be straightforward, but this is certainly not the case. Since divisibility is a semantic concept, many abstract nouns can for example be used in both indivisible and divisible sense (Chesterman, 1991: 133).

In contrast to indivisible nouns, divisible nouns have cumulative reference (cf. ISK, 2004: § 555). Cumulative reference is a semantic property for which the following holds true: Any sum of parts which is X, is X (Quine, 1960; Bunt, 1979). The property of cumulative reference as well as the difference between divisible and indivisible nouns is illustrated by table 12. The table illustrates that divisible nouns have but indivisible nouns do not have the property of referring cumulatively: Any sum of coffee makes ‘coffee’, whereas a sum of books does not make a book but ‘a set of books’.
Table 12. Divisible and indivisible nouns in relation to cumulative reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DIVISIBLE</th>
<th>divisible noun</th>
<th>cumulative reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>divisible noun</td>
<td>kahvi ('coffee')</td>
<td>coffee + coffee + coffee = coffee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to the fact that divisible nouns are not countable in the way indivisible nouns are, divisible nouns do not occur in plural in the same way as indivisible nouns do. Mass nouns can occur in plural if and only if they denote multiple bounded portions of a certain mass. The plural use of mass nouns is illustrated in example (14). The plural mass noun kahvit ('coffees') in this example denotes multiple separate cups of coffee, of which each one is intended for someone else.

(14) He joivat kahvit.

 They drank their coffees.'

Considering quantitative boundedness, it can be stated as a general principle that the object takes partitive case if it denotes an unbounded quantity (ISK, 2004: §930–931). More specifically, the object must either be an abstract noun, a singular mass noun denoting an indefinite quantity, or a plural count noun denoting an unbounded set of entities in order to appear as a partitive object. The restrictive object, in contrast, is used when denoting a bounded quantity. Yet, a restrictive object can be a singular count noun, a mass noun denoting a definite quantity or a plural noun denoting a bounded set of entities (Huumo, 2005).

The principles outlined above take first the role of divisibility and then the role of definiteness into consideration. This means that quantitative boundedness is determined on the basis of an interplay between the inherent divisibility of the object noun and its definiteness in a given context. Thus, a divisible object NP takes partitive case if and only if it does not denote a definite quantity (Vilkuna, 1996: 125). Similarly, a plural indivisible object NP takes partitive case if and only if it denotes an indefinite quantity. The general principles concerning quantitatively bounded and unbounded objects are further clarified by the examples (15)-(16). Both (15b) and (16a) contain the same mass noun leipä ('bread'). Although both sentences thus contain the same divisible object, the difference between the sentences is that the object in example (15b) denotes an indefinite quantity ('some bread'), while the object in (16a) denotes a definite quantity ('a loaf of bread'). Therefore, the object in the former example bears partitive case, while the latter is a restrictive object. Similarly, the object in (15c)

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denotes an indefinite quantity of entities (‘some books’), while the object in (16b) refers to a definite set of books.

Since aspectual boundedness precedes quantitative boundedness, the latter condition is stronger than the former. As a consequence, quantitatively unbounded objects take partitive case even if the sentence is aspectually bounded (Vilkuna, 1996: 125). In the case of aspectually bounded sentences containing a partitive object, the partitive is thus assigned on the basis of the NP-related function of the partitive case, not on its aspectual function (cf. Kiparsky, 1998). The resultative verb *ostaan* (‘to buy’) in example (15a) is for instance aspectually bounded and takes a restrictive object based on this aspectual reading. But in the case of an object denoting an unbounded quantity (either a mass noun like in (b) or a plural form like in (c)), the object appears in partitive case because of its quantitative unboundedness, so that the aspectual boundedness of the verb *ostaan* no longer determines the case-marking of the object.

(15) a. **Ostin kirjan.**
I(Nom) buy-Past.3Sg book-GenAcc.Sg
‘I bought a book.’

b. **Ostin leipää.**
I(Nom) buy-Past.3Sg bread-Part.Sg
‘I bought (some) bread.’

c. **Ostin kirjoja.**
I(Nom) buy-Past.3Sg book-Part.Pl
‘I bought (some) books.’

(16) a. **Ostin (yhden) leivän.**
I(Nom) buy-Past.3Sg (one-GenAcc.Sg) bread-GenAcc.Sg
‘I bought a loaf of bread.’

b. **Ostin (ne) kirjat.**
I(Nom) buy-Past.3Sg (those-Nom) book-Nom.Pl
‘I bought the books.’
Polarity

With respect to object case-marking, polarity is the strongest condition responsible for assigning partitive case. In the case of negative sentences, a partitive object is assigned regardless of the aspectual boundedness of the sentence or the quantitative boundedness of the object (Vilkuna, 1996: 120). Thus, polarity is generally assumed to neutralize all other conditions (ISK, 2004: §930). Although the contrast between the object marking of affirmative sentences and negated sentences is very clearly illustrated by example (17), the way in which polarity affects object case marking has to be further specified, as the presence or absence of a negative marker does distinguish between negated and affirmative sentences, but it does not disentangle sentences with a negative or affirmative reading. Sentences containing a negative marker can, namely, have an affirmative reading and, conversely, sentences lacking a negative marker can have a negative reading (Vilkuna, 1996). The case marking of the object is thus not primarily affected by the syntactic polarity of the sentence but by its semantic polarity (Leino, 1991: 137).

(17) a. Sain kirjeen.  
    receive-Past.1Sg letter-GenAcc.Sg  
    ‘I received the letter.’

b. En saanut kirjettä.  
    Neg-3Sg receive-Past.Participle letter-Part.Sg  
    ‘I did not receive the letter.’

The principle of semantic polarity may be best explained by focusing on Finnish yes/no questions. Semantic polarity, namely, often hides within yes/no questions, which are in Finnish marked by the interrogative particle -kO. The reading of the sentence is revealed on the basis of the affirmative or negative answer to the question: If the expected answer is negative, the sentence has a negative reading and vice versa. Example (18) contains two sentences lacking a negative marker, in which (a) is the neutral variant or the one with affirmative reading, while (b) has a negative reading (because the expected answer to the question is negative). As a consequence, sentence (18a) contains a restrictive object and sentence (18b) a partitive object. As polarity can also be more pragmatic in nature, even
sentences may occur that contain a negative marker but that nevertheless undoubtedly have an affirmative reading (Vilkuna, 1996: 120). Such an exceptional case is exemplified in (19): In spite of the negative marker, a restrictive object is used because of the pragmatic meaning of the sentence.

(18) a. **Saitko kirjeen?**
    receive-Past.1Sg-Interrog letter-GenAcc.Sg
    ‘Did you receive the letter?’

    b. **Saitko kirjettä?**
    receive-Past.1Sg-Interrog letter-Part.Sg
    ‘Did you receive the letter?’ (negative answer expected)
    (‘So I guess you did not receive the letter?’)

(19) **Eikö pidettäisi tauko?**
    Neg-3Sg.Interrog take-Pass.Cond break(Nom.Sg)
    ‘Wouldn’t we take a break?’
    (Pragmatic.: It would be good to take a break → Let’s take a break!)

**The object case alternation: A brief overview**

As discussed in the preceding, the case marking of the Finnish direct object is associated with aspectual boundedness, the quantitative boundedness of the object as well as with polarity. Partitive objects are assigned in negative sentences, aspectually unbounded sentences or objects that denote an unbounded quantity. Affirmative, aspectually bounded sentences containing an object that denotes a bounded quantity take a restrictive object. With respect to the opposition between the partitive and restrictive object, a summarizing overview of sets of contrasting sentence pairs is provided in table 13.

Of the three factors associated with object case marking, polarity is said to be the strongest, as the object of a negative sentence always takes partitive case, regardless of the aspectual reading of the sentence or the quantitative boundedness of the object. Furthermore, since the quantitative boundedness of the object as an influencing factor precedes the factor of aspectual boundedness, an
object denoting an unbounded quantity assigns partitive case regardless of the aspectual reading of the sentence. Speaking in terms of the aspectual and NP-related function of the partitive case as proposed by Kiparsky (1998), the following thus holds true in affirmative sentences: If the object denotes a bounded quantity, a partitive object can be only be assigned on the aspectual function of the partitive case. Conversely, in the case of an aspectually bounded sentence, the object can only be marked with partitive case on the basis of the NP-related function of the partitive.

Table 13. General principles of the Finnish object case alternation: Oppositions between sentences containing a partitive and a restrictive object.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTITIVE OBJECT</th>
<th>RESTRICTIVE OBJECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative sentences</strong></td>
<td><strong>Affirmative, aspectually bounded sentences; objects denotes a bounded quantity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- En saanut kirjettä-Part.Sg</td>
<td>- Sain kirjeen-GenAcc.Sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I did not receive a/the letter’</td>
<td>‘I received the letter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sältkö kirjettä-Part.Sg ?</td>
<td>- Sältkö kirjeen-GenAcc.Sg ?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘So you did not receive the letter?’</td>
<td>‘Did you receive the letter?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aspectually unbounded sentences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kirjoitin kirjettä-Part.Sg</td>
<td>- Kirjoitin kirjeen-GenAcc.Sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I was writing the letter’</td>
<td>‘I finished writing the letter’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Metsästäjä ampui jänistä-Part.Sg</td>
<td>- Metsästäjä ampui jäniksen-GenAcc.Sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The hunter shot at the hare’</td>
<td>‘The hunter shot the hare’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
although polarity, aspectual and quantitative boundedness influence object case marking each in their own independent way (Leino, 1991: 137), the case marking of the object is often associated with more than one of these factors at the same time (Huumo, 2006). Nevertheless, if partitive case is already assigned on the basis of one of these influencing factors, the remaining factors can obviously not affect the case of the object any further, as illustrated in (20). As the verb pelätä (‘to be afraid’) is an irresultative verb, the sentence provided in example (20) is aspectually unbounded. In addition, the object is a plural form denoting an indefinite quantity. Furthermore, the sentence is negated. The sentence thus satisfies all three conditions that favour the assignment of a partitive object. But as the irresultative verb has already licensed a partitive object, neither the quantitative unboundedness of the object nor the negative reading of the sentence further affect the case marking of the object.

(20)  En pelkää hámähäkkejä.
Neg-1Sg to-be-afraid spider-Part.Pl
‘I am not afraid of spiders.’

Which factor has licensed the assignment of a partitive object can, however, not be determined in either case. Sometimes it is very difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle the aspectual and NP-related function of the partitive case. The sentences in (21) and (22), for example, allow ambiguous interpretations. The
sentence in (21) can either be interpreted as an aspectually bounded sentence in which an indefinite quantity of children was taken to school (NP-related function: ‘the bus took some children to school’) or as an aspectually unbounded sentence in which a definite quantity of children was taken to school (aspectual function: ‘the bus was taking the children to school’), an ambiguity which can possibly be resolved on the basis of further context.

(21) Bussi vei lapsia kouluun.

bus(Nom.Sg) take-Past.3Sg child-Part.Pl school-III.Sg

‘The bus was taking the children to school ~ took some children to school.’

If a sentence contains both an ambivalent verb and a mass noun, as in (22), it is even on the basis of further context nearly impossible to disentangle the aspectual and NP-related function of the partitive case. Dependent on further context, the sentence in (22a) could allow both an aspectually bounded interpretation in which the child ate an undefined quantity of porridge and, alternatively, an aspectually unbounded interpretation in which a bounded quantity of porridge was eaten. As opposed to (a), the explicit bound loppuun (‘to an end’) in (22b) reduces to the possibility of assigning a restrictive object only.

(22) a. Lapsi söi puuroa.

child(Nom.Sg) eat-Past.3Sg porridge-Part.Sg

‘The child was eating the porridge ~ the child ate some porridge.’

b. Lapsi söi puuron loppuun.

child(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg porridge-GenAcc.Sg end-III.Sg

‘The child ate the porridge ~ finished eating the porridge.’
2.3.4 Partitive subjects and the Finnish subject case alternation

Subject types in Finnish

In Finnish, the subject is most typically a noun phrase in nominative case, which is congruent with the verb. However, also partitive subjects and genitive subjects are found (Vilkuna, 1996: 110). Based on the case of the subject as well as the presence or absence of subject-verb agreement, Finnish subjects are divided into three different subject types, namely basic subjects, genitive subjects and existential subjects.

The basic subject is a nominative NP that agrees with the finite verb in person and number. The genitive subject is a genitive NP that corresponds to the basic subject of necessive constructions and infinitival constructions. The existential subject (or e-subject) is the subject of the existential sentence. There is no subject-verb agreement between the existential subject and the finite verb. The existential subject prototypically follows the verb, while the basic subject precedes the verb in a sentence with neutral word order. In addition, characteristic of the existential subject is that its case alternates between nominative and partitive. The most frequently occurring existential verbs are \textit{olla} (‘to be’) \textit{olla olemassa} (‘to exist’) and \textit{tulla} (‘to come’). Other examples of existential verbs are \textit{löytyä} (‘to be found’), \textit{syntyä} (‘to come into existence; to emerge’), \textit{kuulua} (‘to belong to’), \textit{sattua} (‘to happen’), \textit{tapahtua} (‘to happen’) and \textit{seurata} (‘to be followed by’). As a consequence of the subject following the verb, the preverbal sentence position is left available for an adverbial expressing either concrete or abstract location (ISK, 2004: §899; §910).

Sentence types favouring a partitive subject

In Finnish, there are two main sentence types that allow partitive subjects, namely existential sentences (23) and quantifying sentences (24). The term existential sentence has initially been used in Indo-European linguistics to refer to sentences starting with a fixed sentence structure like \textit{il y a} (‘there is’) in French, in which the subject is postverbal and indefinite in nature. In 1954, Ikola was the first to use the term existential sentence to refer to Finnish sentences with an existential reading (ISK, 2004: §893). The subject of the existential sentence introduces new information (Vilkuna, 1996: 117) in the sense that the entity denoted by the existential subject has not been referred to in the preceding (ISK, 2004: §893).
The function of the existential structure is thus twofold: On the one hand it introduces a new entity; on the other hand it states a predication about the locative adverbial by reporting its content (Huumo, 1996). In contrast to the existential sentences listed in table 14, Finnish existential sentences are not marked by the presence of a fixed sentence-initial pattern and therefore, Finnish sentences are not as easily recognizable as existential sentences in most Indo-European languages (Vilkuna, 1996: 116).

Table 14. The existential sentence structure in Indo-European languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Fixed sentence-initial structure in existential sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>Il y a beaucoup à faire et à voir.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>C'è molto da fare e da vedere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish</td>
<td>Det finns mycket att göra och att se.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>Es gibt viel zu tun und zu sehen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>Er is veel te doen en te zien.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>There is a lot to do and to see.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finnish existential sentences can be subdivided into basic existential sentences, possessive sentences, possessive-existential sentences and event sentences (23). The characteristics of the basic existential sentence (23a) have already been listed in connection with the description of the existential subject. Basic existential sentences thus start with an adverbial of location. The postverbal subject, which alternates between nominative and partitive, does not show agreement with the existential verb. All other existential sentence subtypes are variations on the basic existential sentence (ISK, 2004: §893).

Along with the other Finno-Ugric languages, Finnish lacks an equivalent of the verb habēre (Lat. ‘to have’). As a consequence, a variation on the existential sentence is used in order to express possession. This so-called possessive sentence (b) is identical to the basic existential sentence, apart from the fact that the preverbal adverbial is marked with adessive case. This adverbial bearing adessive case corresponds to the possessor of the sentence. The possessee, the existential subject, alternates between nominative and partitive in the same way as the subject of the basic existential sentence does (Vilkuna, 1996: 116–117). In Finnish, the possessive construction can only be used with animate possessors.
(e.g. people, animals). Inanimate possessors (e.g. nouns denoting concrete or abstract entities/objects) take the semantically closely related basic existential sentence construction (Karlsson, 1999). The *possessive-existential sentence* (c) is basically a fusion of the basic existential sentence and the possessive sentence in that the possessive-existential sentence contains a possessor marked with adessive case as well as an adverbial of location. The *event sentence* (d) is identical to the basic existential sentence apart from the fact that the event sentence does not involve an adverbial of location. Thus, in event sentences, the preverbal position remains empty (ISK, 2004: §899).

(23)  

a. **Basic existential sentence**

   *Hollannissa on tuulimyllyjä.*
   
   Holland-Iness.Sg be-3Sg windmill-Part.Pl
   
   ‘There are windmills in the Netherlands.’

b. **Possessive sentence**

   *Hänellä on haaveita tulevaisuudesta.*
   
   he-Adess be-3Sg dream-Part.Pl future-Elat.Sg
   
   ‘He has dreams about the future’ (Lit.: ‘To/with him are dreams …)

c. **Possessive-existential sentence**

   *Meillä on Hollannissa paljon tuulimyllyjä.*
   
   we-Adess be-3Sg Holland-Iness.Sg a-lot-of windmill-Part.Pl
   
   ‘We have a lot of windmills in the Netherlands’

d. **Event sentence**

   *On vielä mahdollisuuksia tulla mukaan.*
   
   be-3Sg still possibility-Part.Pl come-Inf along-Adv
   
   ‘There are still possibilities to get involved ~ to join.

In Finnish, a sentence of which its initial noun constituent bears partitive case and is quantified by either a post-verbal numerical expression (24a) or a quantifying adverb (24b) is called a *quantifying sentence* (ISK, 2004: §902; Sakuma, 2005). The quantifying sentence is used to express the quantity of concrete or abstract entities belonging to a group. The initial partitive NP denotes a divisible and
quantitatively unbounded entity which is simultaneously constrained by an absolute (in the case of a numerical expression) or relative boundary (in the case of a quantifying adverb) (ISK, 2004: §902). The quantifying sentence is a marginal construction in Finnish (A. Hakulinen & Karlsson, 1979: 97–99).

(24) \textbf{Quantifying sentence (Kvanttorilause)}

a. Meitä oli seitsemän.
   \textit{we-Part be-Past.3Sg seven(Nom)}
   ‘We were seven (people)’.

b. Meitä oli paljon.
   \textit{we-Part be-Past.3Sg many-Quant.Adv}
   ‘We were many’.

Existential sentences and the quantifying sentences have several common characteristics. Like existential subjects, the subject of the quantifying sentence relates to divisibility and unboundedness. In addition, the prototypical verb of both sentence types is \textit{olla} ‘to be’. One of the differences between quantifying and existential sentences resides, nevertheless, in the fact that the quantifying sentence is characterized by a preverbal subject quantified by a numerical expression or quantifying adverb, while in existential sentences, the subject prototypically follows the verb. Moreover, quantifying sentences assign a partitive subject in any case, whereas the case of the subject of existential sentences alternates between nominative and partitive dependent on the divisibility and definiteness of the subject as well as the polarity of the sentence (ISK, 2004: §902).

\textit{General principles for the case-marking of the existential subject}

As already touched upon in the preceding, the Finnish existential subject is the only subject type showing a case alternation as well as the only subject type allowing its subject to be marked in partitive case. The case assignment of the existential subject depends partly on the same factors that influence the case marking of Finnish objects. The pure aspectual function of the partitive case does not play a role in subject case marking, but the case of the subject is affected by divisibility, definiteness and polarity (ISK, 2004: §916; Huumo, 2006).
Quantitative (un)boundedness: Divisibility and definiteness

The case-marking of existential subjects first and foremost relates to how the subject is perceived, so that it can be stated that the case-marking of the existential subject is affected by its own divisible or indivisible nature (Vilkuna, 1996: 111). This principle builds on the distinction between divisible and indivisible nouns already discussed in section 2.3.3. in the context of Finnish object case-marking. The relation between divisibility and definiteness also outlined in this section pertains to the case-marking of existential subjects in the exact same way as to the case-marking of objects.

With respect to the case-marking of existential subjects, the following general principles can therefore be formulated: In affirmative sentences, subjects denoting an unbounded entity or set of entities assign partitive case and subjects denoting a bounded entity or set of entities assign nominative case (ISK, 2004: §916). More specifically, a divisible noun functioning as existential subject designates an unbounded entity if and only if not a definite quantity of the divisible substance in question is meant. If the existential subject is a divisible noun of which a definite quantity is meant, the subject designates a bounded quantity and thus appears in nominative case (Vilkuna, 1996: 111). Yet, the partitive case is either used as the case of the existential subject if the subject is a divisible noun of which a indefinite quantity is meant (as for example for the mass noun in (25a) ) or if the subject is a plural indivisible noun denoting an indefinite set of entities (cf. (26a)), while the nominative is used in all cases in which the existential subject designates a bounded quantity.

The contrast between partitive and nominative existential subjects is illustrated in example (25) - (27). In (25), the existential subject is a mass noun (kahvi ‘coffee’) of which an indefinite quantity is designated in (a) and a definite quantity in (b). Example (26) and (27) both contain plural existential subjects, denoting indefinite sets of entities in (a) and definite sets of entities in (b).

(25)  a. Tässä on kahvia.
    here-Adv be-3Sg coffee-Part.Sg
    ‘Here is some coffee.’

66
b. **Tässä on kahvi.**
here-Adv be-3Sg coffee(Nom.Sg)-Poss.2Sg
‘Here is your coffee.’

(26) a. **Netistä löytyy ohjeita ~ ohjeita löytyy netistä.**
Internet-Elat.Sg be-found-3Sg instruction-Part.Pl
‘You can find (some) instructions on the Internet.’
(Lit.: ‘(Some) instructions are found from the Internet.’)

b. **Netistä löytyy ohjeet ~ ohjeet löytyy netistä.**
Internet-Elat.Sg be-found-3Sg instruction-Nom.Pl
‘You can find the instructions on the Internet.’
(Lit.: ‘The instructions are found from the Internet.’)

(27) a. **Paikalla oli myös Marian lapsia.**
place-Adess.Sg be-3Sg also Marja-Gen.Sg child-Part.Pl
‘Some of Maria's children were also present.’

b. **Paikalla oli myös Marian lapset.**
place-Adess.Sg be-3Sg also Marja-Gen.Sg child-Nom.Pl
‘Maria's children were also present.’

_Polarity_

As discussed above, the use of the partitive as the case of the existential subject reflects, in affirmative sentences, the syntactic and semantic properties of the subject noun phrase itself. To assign partitive case, the existential subject must be either a mass noun or a plural form denoting an unbounded quantity. In all other cases, the existential subject bears nominative case (Huumo, 2003). In negative sentences, on the other hand, the partitive is used even with singular subjects denoting an indivisible entity (28b) (ISK, 2004: §918). Polarity does not further affect the case-marking of existential subjects denoting unbounded divisible entities, as these mass noun subjects (29) or plural subjects (30) appear in partitive also in affirmative sentences (Vilkuna, 1996: 114).
In summary, it can thus be stated that, regardless of being a mass noun or a count noun, the subject of the existential sentence takes partitive rather than nominative case in negated sentences (Huumo, 2007). The only case in which existential subjects denoting an indivisible entity do take nominative case in negated sentences, is the exceptional case in which the negated existential subject is directly followed by a contrastive affirmative subject (31). In this case, both existential subjects belong to the same noun phrase and therefore, nominative case is assigned to both coordinated NP components (Vilkuna, 1996: 114).
As mentioned earlier, Finnish existential sentences are not characterized by a fixed sentence-initial structure. It is therefore fairly difficult to distinguish existential sentences from morphosyntactically similar sentence types. In this respect, the contrast between the existential sentence (32a) and the non-existential basic intransitive sentence (32b) particularly needs clarification.

The morphosyntactic differences between the existential sentence and the basic intransitive sentences reside in the fact that, in intransitive sentences, the preverbal subject appears in nominative case at the same time showing agreement with the finite verb. In contrast, the subject of the existential sentence follows the verb, alternates between nominative and partitive case, and does not trigger subject-verb agreement. In addition, existential sentences usually start with an adverbial of location (Huumo, 2003).

(32)  

a. **Pihalla leikki lapsia**  
    yard-Adess.Sg  play-Past-3Sg  child-Part.Pl  
    ‘There were (some) children playing in the yard.’

b. **Lapset leikkivät pihalla.**  
    child-Nom.Pl  play-Past.3Pl  yard.Adess.Sg  
    ‘The children were playing in the yard.’

Semantically, the subject of the existential sentences is prototypically assumed to introduce new information, i.e. the entity denoted by the existential subject has not been referred to in the preceding context. The subject of the intransitive sentence, in contrast, does not introduce new information but rather refers to an entity which already has been named earlier (ISK, 2004: §893). Example (33) provides pieces of context that typically could precede an existential sentence introducing a new entity (‘children’) (a) and a non-existential basic intransitive sentence referring back to an entity (‘the children’) that already has been introduced in the preceding (b).
a. On the first morning, Mary woke up by the sun shining into her hotel room. She looked out of the window.

There were children playing in the yard.

b. The Johnson family consists of the parents James and Diane and their three children.

This afternoon, the parents were drinking tea at the patio.

The children were playing in the yard.

Huumo (2003; 2007), however, claims that the semantic contrast between existential sentences and non-existential basic intransitive sentences is basically due to morphosyntactic differences between the two sentence types, rather than to the difference in linear organization of the information referred to by the subject which is argued to be based on principles as new information (existential sentence) versus recurring information (non-existentential sentence). According to Huumo, native-speaker intuitions have indeed suggested that the examples listed in (32) are not semantically interchangeable, but it has been proven to be extremely difficult to name the precise differences between existential sentences and non-existentential basic intransitive sentences.

It should also be borne in mind that word order cannot be acknowledged as a decisive factor in Finnish, as Finnish has a relatively free and flexible word order (ISK, 2004: §1366). Changes in the clausal position of subjects, verbs and objects are permitted under appropriate conditions (Holmberg & Nikanne, 1993), and therefore, word order is a less reliable condition in distinguishing Finnish sentence types than morphosyntax (Huumo, 2007).

As a consequence of relative free word order, the neutral word order of existential sentences and basic intransitive sentences can be changed as demonstrated in between the brackets in (32), so that the word order of the non-existential sentence equals the neutral word order of the existential sentence and the word order of the existential sentence mirrors the neutral word order of non-existentential sentences. Huumo (2007) therefore claims that the only clear difference between the non-existentential basic intransitive sentence and the existential sentence is associated with the semantic function of the nominative versus the partitive case-marking of the subject. More specifically, the quantity of the children is represented as unbounded in (a) but as bounded in (b). In other
words, the existential subject in (a) denotes an indefinite quantity of entities
(‘some children’), while the non-existential subject in (b) designates a definite
quantity of entities (‘the children’).

2.3.5 Partitive predicatives and the predicative case alternation

General principles of predicative case-assignment in Finnish

In addition to a predicative, the copula construction prototypically involves a
subject noun phrase and a copula verb. The typical verb used in Finnish copula
constructions is the verb *olla* (‘to be’). Occasionally, the verb *tulla* (‘to come’)
may also appear in copula constructions. A predicative, which is also called
copula complement, is either an adjective phrase or a noun phrase functioning as
the predicative of the sentence (Sulkala & Karjalainen, 1992: 61). Adjective
phrases functioning as the predicative of the sentence are called *adjective
predicatives*, while noun phrases functioning as the predicatives are usually
referred to as *substantive predicatives* (ISK, 2004: §944). Characteristic for the
predicative is that it predicates something about the nature of the subject of a
copula construction. The subject and the predicative of a copula construction are
thus inherently related in that the latter grammatically refers to the former
(Vilkuna, 1996: 103). Yet, the semantic entity denoted by the subject - which is
called *subject referent* or simply *referent* - may also have its influence on the
predicatives of Finnish copula constructions.

With respect to the case-assignment of predicatives, Finnish predicatives can
best be divided into a category of non-alternating predicatives and a category of
alternating predicatives. Non-alternating predicatives are a small group of
predicatives that assign either genitive case or partitive singular (Vilkuna, 1996).
Genitive predicatives (34) constitute a separate predicative category in the sense
that they only involve noun phrases (ISK, 2004: §944; §958). Considering non-
alternating predicatives, partitive case is assigned if an inclusion relation is
stressed. The singular partitive shows category membership (35a), whereas the
plural partitive denotes group inclusion (35b) (Erelt, 2003). Since such a
predicative denotes an area, group or variety to which the subject referent
belongs, the referent can basically be taken to be part of the concept denoted by
the predicative. For this reason, Sadenimi (1950) called this category of
predicatives *partitive predicatives*. To avoid confusion between the notion of non-
alternating partitive predicatives and alternating partitive predicatives, I will refer to the former as *partitive of inclusion*.

(34) **Genitive predicative**

a. Nämä ovat minun ~ meidän.
these(Nom) be-3Pl 1-Gen ~ we-Gen
‘These ones are mine ~ ours.’

b. Auto on Leon ~ hänen.
car(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg Leo-Gen.Sg ~ he-Gen
‘The car is Leo’s ~ the car is his.’

(35) **Partitive of inclusion**

a. He ovat samaa sukua.
they(Nom) be-3Pl same-Part.Sg family-Part.Sg
‘They are of the same family.’

b. Hän on maailman parhaita laulajia.
s/he(Nom) be-3Sg world-Gen.Sg best.Part.Pl singer-Part.Pl
‘She/he belongs to the best singers of the world.’

**The quantitative (un)boundedness of subject and predicative**

The majority of Finnish predicatives can be classified as alternating predicatives. These types of predicatives are called alternating predicatives, because their case alternates between nominative and partitive (ISK, 2004). The case marking of alternating predicatives primarily depends on the subject and on how the subject is perceived (Vilkuna, 1996: 105). The general principles are that the predicative conforms to the subject in number and expresses the quantitative boundedness of the subject: Subjects denoting unbounded entities take partitive predicatives and subjects denoting bounded entities take nominative predicatives (ISK, 2004: §946). To be more precise in describing the Finnish predicative case alternation, a distinction has to be made between the case assignment of adjective predicatives on the one hand and substantive predicatives on the other hand.
With respect to adjective predicatives, it is sufficient to make more explicit the general principles described above: If the copula subject is a singular count noun, it denotes a bounded, indivisible entity and therefore, it takes a nominative predicative (36). Similarly, the copula subject usually takes a partitive predicative if the subject is either a plural form (37a) or (conceived of as) a mass noun (37b), for a plural form generally denotes an unbounded set of entities and a mass noun an unbounded mass or substance (Huomo, 2007; 2009).

(36) **Auto on uusi.**
car(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg new(Nom.Sg)

‘The car is new.’

(37) a. **Autot ovat uusia.**
car-Nom.Pl be-3Pl new-Part.Pl

‘The cars are new’.

b. **Kahvi oli ~ tuli liian vahvaa.**
coffee(Nom.Sg) be ~ become-Past.3Sg too strong-Part.Sg

‘The coffee was too strong ~ the coffee became too strong.’

The case of the substantive predicative basically alternates in the same way as the case of predicative adjective (Huomo, 2007), but in addition to the nature of the subject referent, the nature of the substantive predicative itself also affects the case assignment of the predicative (ISK, 2004: §944). Therefore, there are two additional principles that hold true for substantive predicatives: Regardless of the quantitative boundedness of its subject, a substantive predicative takes nominative case if the predicative itself is an indivisible noun that denotes a bounded entity (38). Conversely, a substantive predicative takes partitive case regardless of the quantitative boundedness of its subject, if the substantive predicative itself is a divisible noun that denotes an unbounded entity (39) (Huomo, 2007).

(38) **Kahvi on maailman paras asia.**
coffee(Nom) be-3Sg world-Gen.Sg best-Nom.Sg thing-Nom.Sg

‘Coffee is the best thing in the world.’
Two contrasting notions that are inherently related to the predicative case alternation and the concept of quantitative boundedness are a holistic versus a distributive interpretation. The nominative predicative is namely assumed to interpret the subject as a whole (i.e. holistically), whereas the partitive predicative basically characterizes the subject in a distributive way. A distributive interpretation basically means that the characteristic predicated by the predicative is independently ascribed to each homogeneous component of the entity denoted by the subject referent (Huumo, 2007: 22). In the case of a plural copula subject, the partitive predicative thus concerns each individual entity that is part of the group denoted by the subject referent. In the case of a singular divisible noun (i.e. a mass noun), the partitive predicative concerns each individual part of the homogeneous mass denoted by the subject referent (ISK, 2004: §946). A sentence like (37a) thus means that each of the cars denoted by the plural subject is new, and a sentence like (37b) indicates that each part of the coffee was too strong. In line with the fact that partitive predicatives are interpreted distributively, Sadeniemi (1950) calls the category of alternating partitive predicatives distributive predicatives.

There is, nevertheless, a small category of plural subjects that is interpreted holistically rather than distributively (Huumo, 2007). These pluralia tantum (singular pluralae tantum) as well as subjects that indicate a ‘pair of something’ occur in plural only, and as they refer to an entity as a whole or as an inseparable set of entities, they assign a nominative plural predicative (40) (Vilkuna, 1996). If a pluralae tantum does assign a partitive plural predicative, it implies that the subject denotes a set of holistic entities (Huumo, 2007). Examples (40c) and (41) illustrate the contrast between pluralae tantum indicating one holistic entity and pluralia tantum indicating more than one holistic entity. In (41b), the universal quantifier kaikki ‘all’ disambiguates whether one holistic entity or a set of holistic entities is meant, as the quantifier implies multiplicity.
(40) a. **Miehen silmät ovat ruskeat.**
   man-Gen.Sg eyes-Nom.Pl be-3Pl brown-Nom.Pl
   ‘The man’s eyes are brown ~ The man has brown eyes.’

b. **Sakset ovat terävät.**
   scissors-Nom.Plurale Tantum be-3Pl sharp-Nom.Pl
   ‘The scissors are sharp’.

c. **Häät olivat mahtavat.**
   wedding-Nom.Plurale Tantum be-Past.3Sg great-Nom.Pl
   ‘The wedding was great.’

(41) a. **Häät olivat mahtavia.**
   wedding-Nom.Pl be-Past.3Sg great-Part.Pl
   ‘The weddings were great.’

b. **Kaikki häät olivat mahtavia.**
   all-Nom.Pl wedding-Nom.Pl be-Past.3Sg great-Part.Pl
   ‘All (of the) weddings were great.’

**Polarity**

The case of the Finnish predicative alternates between nominative and partitive to a large extent in the same way as the case of the object of transitive sentences and the subject of the existential sentences alternate. However, the case alternation of the predicative differs from the other case alternations in the sense that the object and subject case alternations are only influenced by the characteristics of the object and the subject itself, whereas the predicative case alternation mainly depends on the nature of the subject referent (ISK, 2004:§ 944; Huumo, 2007).

The main resemblance between the case alternations of the subject and the predicative is that, in both cases, mass nouns and bare plurals trigger the use of the partitive case (Huumo, 2007). The main difference between subject and predicative case marking, in turn, is that polarity does not affect the case marking.
of the predicative, whereas negation usually turns all subjects of existential sentences into partitive subjects (ISK, 2004: §944). Thus, the predicative of a copula subject perceived as indivisible remains in nominative case in negated sentences (42b), while the subject of the existential sentences takes partitive case in negated sentences, regardless of being a mass noun or a count noun (43b) (Huumo, 2007).

(42) **Copula construction**

a. Kirja on **vanha**.
   book(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg old(Nom.Sg)
   ‘The book is old.’

b. Kirja ei ole **vanha**.
   book(Nom. Sg) Neg.3Sg be-3Sg old(Nom.Sg)
   ‘The book is not old.’

(43) **Existential sentence**

a. Hyllyllä on **kirja**.
   shelf-All.Sg be-3Sg book(Nom.Sg)
   ‘There is a book on the shelf.’

b. Hyllyllä ei ole **kirjaa**.
   shelf-All.Sg Neg.3Sg be-3Sg book-Part.Sg
   ‘There is no book on the shelf.’

**Variation in Finnish predicative case-assignment**

The principles of predicative case-marking appear to be very straightforward, as least when compared to the case assignment of Finnish objects. In the case of subjects denoting an abstract entity, it is however often unclear whether the subject has to be interpreted distributively or holistically (Huumo, 2007). Abstract nouns are nouns denoting abstract entities, features, situations, actions, feelings and emotions as for example **rakkaus** (‘love’), **musiikki** (‘music’), **onnellisuus** (‘happiness’), **väkivalta** (‘violence’) **suhtautuminen** (‘attitude’, literally:
‘reacting’) and syönti (‘eating’) (ISK, 2004: §555). On the one hand there is a
category of abstract nouns that assign partitive predicatives and on the other hand
there are abstract nouns that allow both partitive and nominative predicatives
nonetheless assign nominative predicatives.

Predicatives that have a dependent clause (44a) or an infinitive construction
(44bc) as referent cannot depend on their referents’ number or divisibility
characteristics, because dependent clauses or infinitive constructions do not
incorporate information of this kind. As a consequence, predicatives referring to a
dependent clause or infinitive construction show, like abstract referents, much
variation in terms of predicative case marking. Although clear rules cannot be
formulated, it could be borne in mind that this type of predicatives seems to be
more inclined to assign partitive than nominative case (Vilkuna, 1996: 107).
Adjectives ending in -inen, -On and -As assign partitive in any case (44a) (ISK,
2004: §954). Some predicatives allow both nominative and partitive predicatives
(44b). A select set of predicatives (hyvä ‘good’, paha ‘bad’ and parempi ‘better’)
only license nominative when referring to a dependent clause or infinitive
construction (44c) (Vilkuna, 1996: 107).

(44)   a. On mielenkiintoista (~ *mielenkiintoinen), että...
      be-3Sg interesting-Part.Sg (~ Nom.Sg) that
      ‘It is interesting that…’

      b. On kiva ~ kivaa tavata ihmisä
      be-3Sg nice-Nom.Sg ~ Part.Sg meet-1Inf person.Part.Pl
      ‘It is nice to meet people.’

      c. On hyvä (~ *hyvää) tavata ihmisä
      be-3Sg good-Nom.Sg (~ Part.Sg) meet-1Inf person.Part.Pl
      ‘It is good to meet people.’
As for the impersonal predicative construction (Finnish tilalause), the same holds as for predicatives having a dependent clause or infinitive construction as their referent. Impersonal predicative clauses also vary with respect to the case assignment of the predicative: Some predicatives take nominative (45a), others partitive case (45b) (ISK, 2004: §954). It is characteristic of impersonal predicative clauses that they cannot be combined with a subject but they often involve an adverbial of location instead (e.g. täällä ‘here’ in example (45)) (Vilkuna, 1996: 107).

(45) a. *(Täällä) on kylmä (~ kylmää).
here be-3Sg cold-Nom.Sg (~ Part.Sg)
‘It is cold (here).’

b. Täällä on mukava (mukava).
here be-3Sg cold-Part.Sg (~ Nom.Sg)
‘It is nice here.’

2.3.6 Similarities and differences between the case alternations

The preceding sections showed that the Finnish object, existential subject and predicative case alternations have common points and points of difference. A schematic overview of the similarities and differences between the three case alternations is provided in figure 2.

The common ground of the case alternations is that they all concern the bounded-unboundedness opposition. Since the object, existential subject and predicative fulfil different syntactic functions, each case alternation has attracted its own semantic and morphosyntactic conditions. These conditions relate to the three functions of the partitive defined by Kiparsky (1998) in a straightforward way: The partitive of negation is assigned in the case of sentences expressing negative polarity (1); the NP-related function of the partitive in the case of quantitatively unbounded NPs (2) and the aspectual partitive in the case of aspectually unbounded sentences (3).
The subject and predicative case alternation can also be termed the nominative-partitive case alternations, as the case of the existential subject and the predicative merely alternates between nominative and partitive. The case of the object alternates between one of the case endings of the restrictive object on the one hand (i.e. nominative, accusative and genitive-accusative in singular and nominative in plural) and partitive (singular or plural) on the other. Yet, the object case alternation exceeds the other alternations in terms of morphosyntactic complexity.

In terms of semantic conditions, the case-marking of the object depends on aspect, polarity and quantitative boundedness, the case-marking of the existential subject on the latter two of these, and the case-marking of the predicative merely on quantitative boundedness. Yet, the case alternations differ in that there is broadly speaking a tripod of semantic conditions involved as far as objects are concerned, two semantic conditions when it comes to subjects and a single condition as far as predicatives are involved.

It is however not only the number of conditions involved but also their nature that is of importance. The aspectual object case alternation is the first to stand out in this respect. Although there is a direct link between the aspectual object and the
predicate, certain Finnish verbs may and others may not have both aspectual readings. Aspect is therefore more a matter of the sentence as a whole rather than of anything else.

As can be inferred from figure 2, the predicative case alternation may not remain unmentioned when it comes to the number of semantic conditions. While it holds true that the predicative case alternation is merely affected by quantitative boundedness, this is both the bounded or unbounded nature of the predicative itself (which is the stronger condition and therefore labelled 1A in the figure) and of the subject the predicative refers to (1B). Condition 1A does not pertain to adjective predicatives. Condition 1B implies that the interpretation of the referent is indispensable when it comes to predicative case-marking.

The subject case alternation stands out for yet its own unique reason. Because of the very fact that direct objects cannot occur elsewhere than in transitive sentences, nor can predicatives occur elsewhere than in copula constructions, the object and predicative case alternations are restricted to these specific sentence types. In contrast, subjects occur in existential sentences, non-existential intransitive sentences and transitive sentences, while the subject case alternation merely pertains to existential subjects. Consequently, the subject case alternation is inherently related to the existential sentence.
2.4 Similarities and differences between the use of the partitive case in Finnish and Estonian

2.4.1 The Finnish and Estonian object case alternation

The general principles of object case marking are largely the same in Finnish and Estonian, although subtle differences can be indicated (Remes, 1983: 245–248). These differences are mainly restricted to the aspectual object case alternation, the case marking of personal pronouns functioning as the object of the sentence and the absence of a morphological accusative case ending in Estonian. All of these three L1-L2 contrast relations will be separately discussed after a general contrastive analysis between Finnish and Estonian object case-marking.

In contrast to Finnish, the Estonian restrictive object covers merely the nominative and genitive-accusative (Erelt, 2003: 96–97). The morphological accusative case is not part of the Estonian declinational system, as even personal pronouns lack a distinctive morphological accusative case ending (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli, 2001: 650). A schematic overview of the Estonian object case alternation is provided in figure 3.

![Fig. 3. The Estonian object case alternation.](image)

Like in Finnish, the partitive object alternates with the restrictive object in Estonian (Erelt, 2003: 96) and likewise, a partitive object is assigned if the sentence is either negated or aspectually unbounded or if the object denotes a quantitatively unbounded entity. As for an affirmative and aspectually bounded sentence containing an object that denotes a quantitatively bounded entity, a restrictive object is licensed (EKG: 1993: 49–51; EKK, 1997: 405). The general principles of the Estonian object case alternation are illustrated in table 15 (cf. table 13 for Finnish).
Table 15. General principles of the Estonian object case alternation: Oppositions between sentences containing a partitive and a restrictive object.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTITIVE OBJECT</th>
<th>RESTRICTIVE OBJECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objects denoting an unbounded quantity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Affirmative, aspectually bounded sentences; object denotes a bounded quantity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Otsin leiba-Part.Sg</td>
<td>- Otsin raamatu-GenAcc.Sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I bought some bread’</td>
<td>‘I bought a book.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Otsin raamatuid-Part.Pl</td>
<td>- Otsin leiva-GenAcc.Sg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I bought some books’</td>
<td>‘I bought a loaf of bread.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative sentences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ma ei otnud raamatut-Part.Sg</td>
<td>- Otsin raamatud-Nom.Pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I did not buy the book’</td>
<td>‘I bought the books.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ma ei otnud leiba-Part.Pl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I did not buy (the) bread.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ma ei otnud raamatuid-Part.Pl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I did not buy (the) books.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The case-marking of personal pronoun objects

Another important point of difference with respect to object case marking in Estonian and Finnish is related to the object case assignment of personal pronouns. In Estonian, first and second person singular personal pronouns often appear as partitive objects when in corresponding Finnish sentences a restrictive object would be assigned. As for Estonian first and second person plural personal pronouns functioning as the object of the sentence, these pronouns even appear as partitive objects in any case (Remes, 1983: 247–248). With respect to object case-marking in Estonian, partitive first and second person personal pronouns cover both the usages of the restrictive and the partitive object (Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli, 2001: 650). The contrast between the case marking of first and second person personal pronouns in Finnish and Estonian as well as differences in object marking in passive and active contexts is illustrated in table 16.
While personal pronoun restrictive objects assign the accusative -t-ending in Finnish, in Estonian first and second person singular personal pronouns functioning as the restrictive object of the sentence take partitive case if there is no distinct nominative subject in the sentence (e.g. in imperative and passive sentences) (Lees, 2003), while in active sentences they are case-marked either in the same way as substantive objects or as partitives. In contrast to singular, Estonian first and second person plural personal pronoun objects assign partitive in any case – regardless of the aspectual boundedness of the sentence and regardless of whether there is a distinctive nominative subject in the sentence. Considering the object case alternation, Finnish personal pronouns thus behave regularly, while Estonian first and second person personal pronouns seem to show an irregular and asymmetric pattern of object case marking, probably because of the absence of a morphological accusative case ending and, additionally, the syncretism between the nominative and genitive of the first and second person personal pronouns in Estonian (first person plural personal pronoun: nom/gen meie or alternatively me (short form); second person plural: nom/gen teie or te).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FINNISH</th>
<th>ESTONIAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal pronoun object</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active</strong></td>
<td>Hän jätti minut yksin.</td>
<td>Ta jättis mind ~ minu üksi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He left me-Acc alone.’</td>
<td>‘He left me-Part ~ GenAcc alone.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passive</strong></td>
<td>Minut jätettiin yksin.</td>
<td>Mind jätetti üksi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘I-Acc was left alone.’</td>
<td>‘I-Part was left alone.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hän jätti meidät yksin.</td>
<td>Ta jättis meid üksi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘He left us-Acc alone.’</td>
<td>‘He left us-Part alone.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Substantive object** |                          |                           |
| **Active**             | Hän jätti lapsen yksin.  | Ta jättis laps yksin.     |
|                        | ‘He left the child-GenAcc alone.’ | ‘He left the child-GenAcc alone.’ |
| **Passive**            | Lapsi jätettiin yksin.  | Laps jätetti üksi.        |
|                        | ‘The child-Nom was left alone.’ | ‘The child-Nom was left alone.’ |
Aspectual marking and the aspectual object case alternation

The widest differences in Finnish and Estonian object case marking are associated with the notion of aspect. Like in Finnish, aspect does not exist as a verbal category in Estonian. Instead, it is expressed by the features of the sentence as a whole (Erelt, 2003), partly by grammatical means and partly by lexicogrammatical means as well as by the semantics of the verb (Sulkala, 1996). Like in other Finnic languages, aspect has not developed into a consistent grammatical category in Estonian (Metslang, 2001), as none of the features expressing aspect have become fully grammaticalized (Sulkala, 1996).

The aspectual object case alternation, which is a feature common to Finnic and Baltic languages (cf. Klaas, 1996; 1999), also plays a role in Estonian aspectual marking. As a consequence of extensive phonological apocope processes (i.e. the loss of one or more phonemes at the end of a word) (Metslang, 2001), Estonian nonetheless shows a large amount of case syncretism (cf. Remes, 2010: 51–53). In particular the genitive and partitive singular frequently have identical surface forms. Although a subtle phonetic distinction is made in pronunciation, it is, however, often not possible to discriminate between partitive and genitive case endings on the basis of written word forms (Remes, 1983: 245–248). As a consequence, the opposition between the Estonian object case forms has often been neutralized (Metslang, 2001), implying that the object case alternation is no longer a sufficient way of expressing aspectual oppositions (Metslang, 1994; Erelt, 2003).

In order to compensate for the syncretistic development that affected the aspectual object case alternation, Estonian has started to express aspectual boundedness often explicitly by utilizing certain lexical means, i.e. adverbial particles (EKG, 1993: 25). Such adverbial particles are basically particles like ära (‘off, away’), läbi (‘through’), välja (‘out’), maha (‘down’), üles (‘up’) which are used in conjunction with the verb, forming particle verbs like ära süüa (‘to eat up’), maha jätta (‘to abandon’) and läbi lugeda (‘to read through’) (Erelt, 2003). Adverbial particles are used as an overt indicator of resultative aspect, since resultative aspect represents the marked side of the aspectual opposition in Estonian (Metslang, 2001). The particles can often be optionally used to merely emphasize the aspectual boundedness of the action. However, in some cases their use is required in order to disambiguate a sentence (cf. example (46)). In those instances in which the object noun has identical genitive-accusative and partitive
forms, an adverbial particle consequently serves as the only overt indicator of the distinction between the restrictive and partitive object (Vihman, 2004: 29).

Considering the use of adverbial particles to express aspecualt oppositions, Estonian thus clearly differs from Finnish. Unlike Estonian, the Finnish aspecualt case alternation has been preserved much the way as it developed during proto-Finnic (Metslang, 1994), because substantially fewer phonological changes have taken place in the development of the Finnish language (Metslang, 2001). Therefore, the object case alternation is usually sufficient to express the aspecualt oppositions in Finnish (Klaas, 1999) and there is no need to use particle verbs in order to express the aspecualt meaning of the sentence (Metslang, 2001). The contrast between Finnish and Estonian aspecualt marking is illustrated in (46)-(47).

In (46), the particle adverb ära (‘away, off’) serves as the only overt indicator of aspecualt boundedness in the Estonian sentence, because the partitive and genitive-accusative forms of the noun kana (‘chicken’) are identical. The Finnish object case forms can, in contrast, clearly be distinguished (kanaa vs. kanan).

(46a)

**Finnish**  
Hän söi kanaa.  
s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg chicken-Part.Sg

**Estonian**  
Ta sõi kana.  
s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg chicken-Part.Sg

‘She/he was eating (the) chicken.’

(46b)

**Finnish**  
Hän söi kanan.  
s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg chicken-GenAcc.Sg

**Estonian**  
Ta sõi kana ära.  
s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg chicken-GenAcc.Sg away-Adv

‘She/he ate (up) the chicken.’
In (47), the restrictive and partitive object forms can be distinguished in both Finnish and Estonian, but the particle *ära* is nevertheless used to emphasize the resultativeness of the action in the Estonian sentence in (47b). The obligatory use of the particle not only in (46) but also in (47) signifies that it does not depend on the syncretism of the object forms but on the characteristics of the verb whether or not the use of an adverbial particle is recommended. According to Remes (1983: 248), a subset of the Finnish ambivalent verbs (i.e. verbs that alternatively assign a partitive or restrictive object dependent on the aspectual meaning of the sentence), have Estonian counterparts that assign a partitive object unless a particle is added on the basis of which the sentence receives an aspectually bounded meaning and the object is turned into a restrictive object.

(47a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Estonian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hän söi kakkua.</td>
<td>Ta sõi kooki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg cake-Part.Sg</td>
<td>s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg cake-Part.Sg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘She/he was eating (the) cake.’

(47b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Estonian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hän söi kakun.</td>
<td>Ta sõi koogi ära.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg cake-GenAcc.Sg</td>
<td>s/he(Nom) eat-Past.3Sg cake-GenAcc.Sg away-Adv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘She/he ate (up) the cake.’

It is a recent Estonian development to use particles in order to indicate aspectual oppositions. A similar change has not taken place in Finnish or in any other Finnic language (Vihman, 2004). Considering the fact that aspect can either be expressed in an analytic or in a synthetic way, the Estonian language is currently clearly at the crossroads. On the one hand aspect can still be expressed by the aspectual object case alternation, as in Finnish, and on the other hand adverbial particles can be used to either indicate or emphasize aspectual oppositions. However,
Estonian is nowadays clearly biased toward the analytical way of expressing aspect, a device which is typologically more suitable to modern Estonian and similarly enables the unambiguous expression of aspe ctual oppositions (Metslang, 1994).

The transition from marked object cases towards adverbial particles in order to express aspect namely signifies a transition from synthetic to more analytic ways of expression (Sulkala, 1996). This development can be regarded natural when taking into consideration the general development of Estonian from a purely synthetic into a more analytical language: As it involved an increase in syncretism and form homonymy, the most natural way to restore transparency was to take a clear analytical marker into use. Since the German adverbial particles as well as verbal prefixes and adverbial particles in other contact languages frequently carry aspectual meaning, the transition toward the use of adverbial particles in order to express aspectual meaning does not only seem to be motivated by intralingual but also by interlingual factors (Metslang, 2001).

(Quasi-)resultative versus irresultative verbs

Like in Finnish, Estonian verbs are divided into different aspectual categories on the basis of the objects they allow and generally assign. Although there is a large overlap between Finnish and Estonian semantic verb categories that are inherently irresultative and, as a consequence, take a partitive object, also several differences can be pointed out. Overall, it can be stated that inherently irresultative verbs are more common in Estonian than in Finnish (Remes, 1983: 247–248).

Table 17. Mental verbs and verbs of perception in Finnish and Estonian.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Estonian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nähdä</td>
<td>näha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muistaa</td>
<td>mäletä</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uskoa</td>
<td>usuda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tietää</td>
<td>teada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuntea</td>
<td>tunda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While certain mental verbs and verbs of perception (listed in table 17) generally take a restrictive object in Finnish, in Estonian these verbs always assign a partitive object (Sulkala, 1996; Klaas, 1999). This is an interesting difference in
object case marking, recalling that these mental verbs and verbs of perception in Finnish all belong to the aspectual category of quasi-resultative verbs (i.e. verbs that generally assign a restrictive object, although they seemingly refer to an irresultative event). Thus, while this group of verbs seemingly has contradictory semantic and morphosyntactic features in Finnish (cf. Huumo, 2005, for an argumentation on the case marking of Finnish quasi-resultative verbs from a cognitive linguistics' point of view), the object case-marking of their Estonian counterparts seems to be more straightforward in the way that they refer to an irresultative event and, consequently, take a partitive object.

The contrast in case-marking between the Finnish and Estonian mental verbs and verbs of perception listed in table 17, is illustrated in example (48), in which the Finnish equivalent of the perception verb ‘to see’ takes a restrictive object and the Estonian equivalent a partitive object. From (49), it can be inferred that there are exceptional cases in which mental verbs belonging to the same verb category license a partitive object in Finnish. As illustrated in (49b), a partitive object is assigned in Finnish if and only if the object is so to speak partially affected. In this particular case, a partitive object is licensed because the subject does not thoroughly know the object (‘the girl’) but he knows her to a limited and partial extent only.

(48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>Estonian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hän näki tytöin.</td>
<td>Ta nägi tüdrukut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s/he(Nom) see-Past.3Sg girl-GenAcc.Sg</td>
<td>s/he(Nom) see-Past.3Sg girl-Part.Sg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘She/he saw the girl’
(49a)

**Finnish**

Hän tuntee tytön.

s/he(Nom) know-3Sg girl-GenAcc.Sg

**Estonian**

Ta tunneb tüdrukut.

s/he(Nom) know-3Sg girl-Part.Sg

‘She/he knows the girl.’

(49b)

**Finnish**

Hän tuntee tyttöä vähän.

s/he(Nom) know-3Sg girl-Part.Sg a-bit

‘She/he knows the girl a little.’

Furthermore, some verbs are aspectually ambivalent in Finnish but inherently irresultative in Estonian. The difference in aspectual interpretation hereby resides in the fact that in Estonian the mere process is emphasized, while in Finnish the situation can either be described by stressing the process (i.e. the irresultative reading) or by focusing on the result (i.e. the resultative reading) (Klaas, 1999). The verb *haluta ~ tahta* (‘to want’), in (50) is an example of a verb that is ambivalent in Finnish but irresultative in Estonian. The partitive object in both Finnish and Estonian emphasizes the process of ‘wanting a child’, whereas the restrictive object in Finnish implies the resultative reading of the verb *haluta*.

(50)

**Finnish**

Filmitähti haluaa lapsen ~ lasta.

movie star(Nom.Sg) want-3Sg child-GenAcc.Sg ~ Part.Sg

**Estonian**

Filminäitleja tahab last.

movie star(Nom.Sg) want-3Sg child-Part.Sg

‘The movie star wants (to have) a child.’
2.4.2 The Finnish and Estonian subject case alternation

The Estonian subject case alternation is in essence similar to Finnish: The subject of a negated existential sentence always assigns partitive case, while the subject of an affirmative existential sentence alternates between nominative and partitive (EKG, 1993: 43–44; Erelt, 2003). Like Finnish, the Estonian subject of the existential sentence introduces new information (EKK, 1997: 403).

However, there are also several substantial differences between the case-marking of Estonian and Finnish existential sentences (Nemvalts, 1996: 18). The main difference between Estonian and Finnish is that, from a morphosyntactic perspective, the Estonian language distinguishes between two different types of existential sentences. A schematic overview of the morphosyntactic contrast between the Finnish and Estonian existential sentence is provided in figure 4. The schema shows the prototypical structure and word order of the Finnish and Estonian existential sentence as well as possible agreement relations. In both languages, existential sentences start with an adverb of location (AdvP), and the finite verb predicate (VP fin) is followed by a subject alternatively marked by nominative or partitive case.

Fig. 4. Schematic overview of the Finnish / Estonian existential sentence ‘There is a book / (some) books / (some) bread on the table.’

| VP fin | - | finite verb predicate |
| VP 3.sg | - | verb predicate in third person singular |
| - | - | possible agreement relation |
From figure 4 it can be inferred that, while in Finnish existential sentences there is no subject-verb agreement between the existential subject and the finite verb, the nominative existential subject triggers agreement on the verb in Estonian\(^2\) (Nemvalts, 1996: 18–19; Erelt & Metslang, 2006). The partitive subject of the Estonian existential sentence does not trigger agreement on the verb, but remains in the third person singular (EKK, 1997: 403; Erelt, 2003: 96). Since on the basis of the prototypical construction of the Estonian existential sentence the plural $e$-subject also possibly bears nominative case, Estonian thus differs from Finnish in that there is an existential sentence construction in Estonian in which the plural subject bears nominative case and agrees with the finite verb. As a consequence, the contrast between the existential sentence and the non-existential basic intransitive sentence is even less sharp in Estonian than in Finnish.

While in the case of a plural subject, there is a morphosyntactic contrast between the Finnish existential sentence and basic intransitive sentence, the Estonian basic intransitive sentence merely differs from the existential sentence type containing a plural nominative subject with respect to its prototypical word order (cf. table 18). Because Estonian has, like Finnish, a relatively free word order (Vilkuna, 1998), the difference in word order between the basic intransitive and the existential sentence can be considered a negligible contrast. Like Huumo and Perko (1993: 399) pointed out for Finnish that existentiality basically represents a continuum, it makes even more sense for Estonian to regard existential versus non-existential sentences as forming a continuum rather than being sharply distinguished categories.

\(^2\) In Estonian, the third person plural present tense form of the verb *olla* (‘to be’) is identical to the third person singular present tense form. This exceptional form of the morphological paradigm (Nemvalts, 1996: 19) makes it difficult and, in some cases, even impossible to determine whether or not the existential subject actually triggers agreement on the verb.
Table 18. Existential vs. non-existential sentences in Estonian and Finnish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTONIAN</th>
<th>FINNISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-existential basic intransitive sentence</td>
<td>Non-existential basic intransitive sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The trees are growing in the garden.’</td>
<td>‘The trees are growing in the yard.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existential sentence</td>
<td>Existential sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aias kasvavad puud -Nom.Pl</td>
<td>- Puutarhassa kasvaa puuta -Part.Pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There are trees growing in the garden.’</td>
<td>‘There are trees growing in the yard.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aias kasvab puud -Part.Pl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘There are trees growing in the garden.’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The case alternation of the existential subject

As for which meanings are expressed by the nominative or partitive e-subject and under which conditions the nominative or partitive has to be selected as the case of the subject, this is influenced by various interacting factors (Nemvalts, 1996: 134). With respect to the case alternation of the Estonian existential subject, it is however crucial to determine under which conditions an existential subject optionally assigns nominative case, and under which conditions a partitive plural existential subject is the sole alternative (Nemvalts, 1996: 33–34).

Despite the morphosyntactic differences between the two existential sentence types in Estonian, there is, in the literature, no consensus on whether there is a semantic difference between existential sentences involving a partitive plural or nominative plural subject. It is not the semantic content expressed by the partitive subject that causes disagreement. Like in Finnish, the partitive e-subject is commonly agreed upon to be associated with quantitative unboundedness: In affirmative sentences, the subject denotes a quantitatively unbounded entity (a mass or substance, abstract entity or an indefinite multiplicity of entities (plural)). The partitive e-subject leaves the nature of entity or entities it denotes indefinite. The partitive subject is associated with partial meaning or nuance as well as with paucity (Klaasis on vett ~ natuke vett ‘There is (some) water in the glass’) (EKG, 1993: 44; EKK, 1997: 403).

With respect to the semantic content of the nominative existential subject, researchers nevertheless advocate different viewpoints. On the one hand, the contrast between the nominative and partitive existential subject is assumed to
correspond to the contrast between quantitative boundedness and unboundedness. Hietam (2005), for example, argues that the nominative plural existential subject in general tends to denote a quantity that is bounded in some way (51a), while the partitive marks an unbounded quantity (51b). In this respect, nominative is thus regarded to be associated with the affirmative polarity of the sentence and with subjects denoting bounded entities, while partitive is related to the negative polarity of the sentence and with subjects denoting unbounded entities.

On the other hand, Erelt and Metslang (2006) argue that in Estonian a partitive subject is obligatory in negative sentences only, because in affirmative sentences, mass nouns or plural count nouns can be in nominative case also when denoting an unbounded quantity. Estonian differs from Finnish in this respect, because in Finnish, the partitive is obligatorily assigned as the case of the existential subject in cases of mass nouns and plural forms denoting an unbounded quantity (Erelt & Metslang, 2006), a contrast illustrated in (52).

(51) a. Őues mängivad lapsed.
garden-Iness play-3Pl child-Nom.Pl
‘There are (the) children playing in the yard.’

b. Őues mängib lapsi.
garden-Iness play-3Sg child-Part.Pl
‘There are (some) children playing in the yard.’

(52)  
Finnish  Mukissa on kahvia (~ *kahvi).
mug-Iness.Sg be-3Sg coffee-Part.Sg (~ Nom.Sg)

Estonian  Kruusis on kohvi ~ kohv.
mug-Iness.Sg be-3Sg coffee-Part.Sg ~ Nom.Sg

‘There is coffee in the mug.’
In general, it can therefore be argued that, in Estonian, no sharp distinction can be drawn between nominative and partitive existential subjects (EKK, 1993: 44). In affirmative sentences, the partitive subject denotes quantitative unboundedness but it can, however, be replaced by the nominative in most cases (Erelt, 2003: 96). The case alternation of the Estonian existential subject is therefore often a matter of choice between equal alternatives. As a result, the nominative plural and partitive plural existential subject can generally be regarded as parallel forms (Nemvalts, 1996: 134).

There are nevertheless some specific contexts in which the content expressed by the nominative or partitive e-subject differ to some extent. This is in particular the case for subject noun phrases containing an attributive adjective. The sentences in (53), for example, reflect the way in which semantic nuances can be expressed by assigning respectively a partitive plural or a nominative plural e-subject. In (53a), the partitive subject implies that at least some of the entities denoted by the subject exhibit the feature of being old, while the sentence variant in (53b) indicates that all entities referred to by the subject exhibit the feature indicated by the attributive adjective (Nemvalts, 1996: 51). In this respect, the alternation between the partitive and nominative e-subject does not seem to depend on the opposition between quantitatively unbounded versus quantitatively bounded but rather seems to be associated with the adjective being attributed to either a part (53a) or the whole (53b) of the entities denoted by the subject.

(53) a. **Kapis on vanu asju.**
closet-Iness.Sg  be-3Sg old-Part.Pl thing-Part.Pl
‘There are old things in the closet.’
(⇒ At least some things in the closet are old.)

b. **Kapis on vanad asjad.**
closet-Iness.Sg  be-3Pl old-Nom.Pl thing-Nom.Pl
‘There are old things in the closet.’
(⇒ All things in the closet are old.)
Yet, whether the subject NP does or does not include an attributive adjective does not necessarily influence the case assignment of the plural e-subject. However, it should be noted that the nominative plural of a noun like asi ('thing'; nom.pl: asjad) is so general in meaning that there is no point in using it without an attributive adjective, while its partitive plural form asju can very well be used without attributive adjective as it implies vagueness and indefiniteness (cf. 54) (Nemvalts, 1996: 51).

(54)  
Kapis on asju (~ *asjad).  
closet-Iness.Sg be-3Sg thing-Part.PL (~ Nom.PL)  
‘There is (some) stuff in the closet.’

In addition, there are a few existential verbs that do not allow nominative subjects, because the verbs themselves imply quantitative unboundedness. For these verbs, e.g. piisata ('to be sufficient'), jätkuda ('to be sufficient'), immitseda ('to ooze'), tunduda ('to seem'), a partitive subject is the sole possibility (EKG, 1993: 45; Erelt, 2003). An example sentence containing the verb piisata ('to be sufficient') is provided in (55).

(55)  
Tööd (~ *töö) piisab järgmiseks aastaks.  
work-Part.Sg (~ Nom.Sg) be-sufficient-3Sg next year-Transl.Sg  
‘There is enough work for the following year’

The case-marking of personal pronouns in possessive sentences

In addition to the general contrasts between the Finnish and Estonian existential sentence, a difference can also be indicated with respect to the case assignment of personal pronoun subjects in the possessive sentence, which has earlier been introduced as a subtype of the existential sentence. This morphosyntactic difference basically resides in that if the existential subject of a possessive sentence is a personal pronoun, the subject assigns the t-ending accusative in Finnish, while in Estonian, a similar subject takes nominative and moreover triggers agreement on the verb (Erelt & Metslang, 2006). Admittedly, the occurrence of accusative existential subjects in Finnish is limited to a highly restricted class of words only, since the Finnish accusative t-ending only exists for
personal pronouns and the interrogative pronoun *kuka* (‘who’). However, as personal pronouns are frequently used in language, the morphosyntactic difference is nevertheless of importance when it comes to distinguishing between Finnish and Estonian possessive sentences (Nemvalts, 1996: 19).

The contrast between Estonian and Finnish possessive sentences involving a personal pronoun is very clearly illustrated in (56). The first- and second-person personal pronouns constitute the subject of both sentences. In Finnish, the existential verb *olla* (Lit. ‘to be’; generally translated as ‘to have’ in possessive sentences) appears in the non-congruent third person singular and both subjects bear accusative case. Unlike Finnish, the Estonian sentence shows subject-verb agreement: the copula verb subsequently agrees with the nominative second-person personal pronoun *sina* and the nominative first-person personal pronoun *mina*.

(56)

**Finnish** Minulla on *sinut* ja sinulla on *minut*.
I-Adess.Sg be-3Sg you-Acc and you-Adess.Sg be-3Sg I-Acc

**Estonian** Muloled *sina* ja sul olen *mina*.
I-Adess.Sg be-2Sg you(Nom) and you-Adess.Sg be-1Sg I(Nom)

‘I have you and you have me.’

However, as a consequence of the contrast in case-marking between Estonian and Finnish possessive sentences involving personal pronoun subjects as well as the presence or absence of subject-verb agreement, also a subtle semantic difference seems to emerge. As both languages lack an equivalent of the verb ‘to have’ (Lat. *habēre*), possessive sentences are used to express possession, but in this case the Estonian sentence, but not the Finnish sentence, could alternatively or even preferably be translated as ‘I am with you and you are with me’ (i.e. without utilizing the English verb ‘to have’ in the translation) and this would be the better translation on the basis of the combination of the nominative case-marking of the existential subject and the presence of subject-verb agreement as well as the adessive adverbial. Because of their morphosyntactic contrast, the Estonian sentence and the Finnish sentence are thus not entirely equivalent.
In addition, the morphosyntactic contrast between the Finnish and Estonian sentence pair in (56) touches upon the controversy of whether existential subjects are really subjects or whether it is more appropriate to refer to them as either objects or a sentence member in between subject and object (cf. Helasvuo, 1996a; Nemvalts, 1996: 26–27). The postverbal position of the subject, the possibility of partitive case-marking and the lack of subject-verb agreement belong to the features that make the existential subject more object-like (Erelt & Metslang, 2006). Nevertheless, the most object-like feature the Finnish existential subject exhibits is its personal pronoun accusative t-ending (ISK, 2004: §923) as in (11). In this respect, the Estonian existential subject is more subject-like than its Finnish counterpart, since the Estonian e-subject has more and the Finnish e-subject fewer features in common with typical subjects (Erelt & Metslang, 2006).

2.4.3 Predicative case-marking in Finnish and Estonian

As touched upon in the preceding, Finnish and Estonian differ substantially with respect to the case-marking of predicatives (Remes, 1983: 248). In contrast to Finnish, the occurrence of partitive predicatives is very limited in Estonian (Erelt, 2009). While the case of Finnish distributive predicatives alternates between nominative and partitive, Estonian lacks a similar predicative case alternation (Metslang, 1994: 210). Instead, the Estonian distributive predicative always takes nominative case (Denison, 1957: 247). Thus, unlike Finnish, the case of the Estonian distributive predicative does not depend on the perceived divisibility and definiteness of the subject referent or predicative.

The contrast between the Finnish and Estonian distributive predicative is illustrated in (57)-(59). In these examples, the copula subject is subsequently a mass noun denoting a divisible substance (‘milk’), a singular form referring an abstract entity (‘beauty’), and a plural form designating a divisible multiplicity of entities (‘questions’). In Finnish, partitive case is assigned to the distributive predicatives characterizing these divisible referents, while the corresponding Estonian predicatives appear in nominative case (singular in cases of mass nouns (57) and singular abstract nouns (58); plural in the case of plural subjects denoting an indefinite set of entities (59)).

(57)

**Estonian**

\[ \text{Piim on väga rammus.} \]

milk(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg very nourishing(Nom.Sg)
‘Milk is very nourishing.’

(58)

Estonian

Ilu ei ole püsiv.

beauty(Nom.Sg) Neg.3Sg be-3Sg lasting(Nom.Sg)

Finnish

Kauneus ei ole pysyvää.

beauty(Nom.Sg) Neg.3Sg be-3Sg lasting-Part.Sg

‘Beauty is not lasting.’

(59)

Estonian

Küsimused olid rasked.

question-Nom.Pl be-Past.3Pl difficult-Nom.Pl

Finnish

Kysymykset olivat vaikeita.

question-Nom.Pl be-Past.3Pl difficult-Part.Pl

‘The questions were difficult’

Although distributive predicatives invariably assign nominative case, partitive predicatives do occur in Estonian. Partitive predicatives, however, merely occur in instances in which the predicative denotes an area, group or domain to which the subject belongs (Remes, 1983: 248). This category of non-alternating partitive predicatives, which has been termed partitive of inclusion in the preceding, is found in both Finnish and Estonian, but its occurrence is very limited in either language. Like in Finnish, the Estonian plural partitive shows group inclusion, while the singular partitive indicates category membership. The singular partitive of inclusion exists for the Estonian nouns liik (‘kind’), tõug (‘breed’), klass (‘category’), tüüp (‘type’), laad (‘kind’), sort (‘sort’), sugu (‘kin’), mast (‘kind’), nāgu (‘face, kind’), värv (‘colour’) and järk (‘category’) only (EKG, 1993: 58; EKK, 1997: 410; Erelt, 2003: 97–98). The examples (60)-(62) show equivalent Estonian-Finnish sentence pairs containing the partitive of inclusion. As can be
inferred by comparing (60) and (61), the singularity or plurality of the subject does not affect the number marking of the predicative. In contrast to its two preceding examples, (62) does not indicate category membership but group inclusion, which is reflected by a plural predicative of inclusion.

(60)

Estonian  
Ta on suurt sugu.

s/he(Nom) be-3Sg big-Part.Sg family-Part.Sg

Finnish  
Hän on suurta sukua.

s/he(Nom) be-3Sg big-Part.Sg family-Part.Sg

‘She/he is of noble birth.’

(61)

Estonian  
Kõik koerad on sama tõugu.

all dog-Nom.Pl be-3Pl same-Part.Sg breed-Part.Sg

Finnish  
Kaikki koirat ovat samaa rotua.

all dog(Nom.Pl) be-3Pl same-Part.Sg breed-Part.Sg

‘All dogs are of the same breed.’

(62)

Estonian  
Ta on maailma parimaid lauljaid

s/he(Nom) be-3Sg world-Gen.Sg best-Part.Pl singer-Part.Pl

Finnish  
Hän on maailman parhaimpia laulajia.

s/he(Nom) be-3Sg world-Gen.Sg best-Part.Pl singer.Part.Pl

‘She/he belongs to the world’s best singers.’
2.4.4 Concluding remarks

The preceding sections provided an outline of the similarities and differences between Finnish and Estonian object-, subject- and predicative case-marking. The lack of an Estonian equivalent to the Finnish nominative-partitive predicative case alternation hereby stood out as the most striking difference between both languages. Although the focus of the chapter was on morphosyntax, the section on Finnish and Estonian object case-marking also briefly touched upon certain morphophonological changes that have taken place in Estonian, and the influence of these changes have had on the expression of aspectual contrasts in Estonian. In short, it was described how the syncretism that has arisen through morphophonological shortening of the endings of the Estonian grammatical cases increased the need to express aspectual contrasts by the aspectual object case alternation, and also by adverbiale particles. In the light of this, the relationship between morphophonology, nominal morphology and morphosyntax is obvious.

In a similar vein, differences concerning subject-verb agreement and verbal inflection came to light when discussing the morphosyntactic structure of Finnish and Estonian existential and possessive sentences. The lack of distinct third person singular and third person plural present tense forms of the Estonian verb olla ('to be') was hereby explicitly mentioned, while the fact that the Finnish negative verb does and its Estonian equivalent does not inflect for person and number was indirectly addressed.

Particularly for morphologically rich languages such as Finnish and Estonian, it is thus undoubtedly meaningful to take the relationship between nominal morphology, verbal morphology and morphosyntax into consideration, and to constantly bear in mind that morphology and morphosyntax are inherently related. For a thorough contrastive comparison of Finnish and Estonian nominal and verbal morphology, see Remes (2009).
3 The use of prior linguistic knowledge in foreign language learning

This chapter focuses on the role of prior linguistic knowledge in foreign language learning. It will first introduce the concept of first language influence (L1 influence) and then proceed with a brief historical overview of the study of L1 influence. Hereafter, the chapter will discuss evidence of L1 influence concerning the linguistic levels that are of main relevance to this dissertation, morphology and syntax. It will subsequently be argued that both L1 influence and intralingual influence emerge from the use of relevant prior linguistic knowledge learners have at their disposal.

3.1 The study of first language influence

What is peculiar about the interaction between languages is that it has attracted attention ever since antiquity, as demonstrated by references from several ancient Greek writers (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 1). The earliest reference can be found in the 19th book of Homer's Odyssey, which characterizes the languages of Crete as 'mixed languages' (Janse, 2002: 333):

"\v{a}\ll\v{e} δ' \v{a}ll\v{e}w \v{g}l\v{o}ss\v{a} m\v{e}m\v{i}m\v{e}n"  
('and every language is mixed with others'; Odyssey 19: 175)

Likewise, the influence of the first language on the second has been of interest to scholars since long before the study of L1 influence was established as a research area in its own right. It is probably for that reason that the study of L1 influence is often dated back no further than the 1950s (Odlin, 1989: 6). It was namely by then that the study of L1 influence was introduced as a research area within the field of Second Language Acquisition. Since those days, L1 influence has probably been one of the most extensively investigated phenomena in the SLA field (Kaivapalu, 2005; Kaivapalu & Martin, 2007). Yet, no area of SLA research that has received similar attention has at the same time remained as elusive as that of L1 influence (Jarvis, 2000). One of the core reasons why there is still no general agreement on the exact nature of L1 influence -despite extensive efforts to get to the bottom of the phenomenon- is that the interaction between languages is extremely complex in nature (Dechert & Raupach, 1989), which makes L1 influence not only a fascinating but also a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.
Confusing and contradictory claims toward L1 influence can nevertheless largely be attributed to the theoretical, terminological and methodological differences that come to light when characterizing the study of L1 influence from a historical point of view. The remaining part of this section therefore briefly discusses the study of L1 influence from the time onward that it became established as a research area within the field of Second Language Acquisition.

First, it should hereby be mentioned that few research interests have to a similar extent been affected by the change of theoretical paradigms as the study of L1 influence (Kellerman, 1995). Because the study of L1 influence has continuously been tied in with the varying theoretical perspectives on Second Language Acquisition, beliefs about the nature of L1 influence as well as about its mere existence have changed in accordance with the shift of theoretical perspectives on SLA (Gass & Selinker, 1994: 53).

As Second Language Acquisition was in the 1950s still a relatively new field of research, it was initially strongly dependent on behaviourism and structuralism, the dominant schools of psychology and linguistics of that time (cf. Gass & Selinker, 2008: 90–95). As a consequence, initial work in the area of L1 influence also focused on behavioural aspects of the phenomenon (Gass & Selinker, 1994: 79). Robert Lado is generally considered one of the first scholars to study the phenomenon of L1 influence from within the field of SLA. Lado’s influential work *Linguistics Across Cultures: Applied linguistics for language teachers* (1957) in some ways complements that of Uriel Weinreich (Cook, 1993: 10). Lado however not only took a similar position as Weinreich did in his groundbreaking book *Language contacts* (1953) but he also acknowledged Weinreich for the empirical evidence supporting this claim (Odlin, 2012). While Weinreich was primarily interested in the way languages influence each other when they come in contact, Lado's overall objective was to facilitate language teaching (Cook, 1993: 10). It may be for this reason that the theoretical foundations of Contrastive Analysis are often ascribed to Lado. His claim for what later became known as the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) was formulated as follows:

“The student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to his native language will be simple for him, and those elements that are different will be difficult (Lado, 1957: 2).”
As a behaviourist approach, Contrastive Analysis assumed that learning a new language merely involved the establishment of new habits and the transfer of existing habits from the one language to the other. Since similarities do not involve new learning, the similarities between languages were for the most part left out of consideration. The actual focus was on the differences between languages, which were taken to predict L2 errors. As a consequence, systematic comparisons between a learner's L1 and L2 were assumed to predict the exact difficulty and ease of learning (Gass & Selinker, 2008: 96–97).

However, it soon became evident that neither all errors made by learners were caused by L1 influence nor all areas predicted by the CAH were actually difficult for learners. In an attempt to meet much of the criticism toward Contrastive Analysis, Wardhaugh formulated in 1970 a weaker version of the CAH. According to this weak version, only some of the errors made by learners were assumed to be traceable back to L1 influence (R. Ellis, 2008: 359–361). This weak version later became part of Error Analysis (Gass & Selinker, 2008: 97; cf. Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005: 51–56). Nevertheless, since neither version of Contrastive Analysis was found to be particularly convincing, the framework fell out of favour after having dominated the study of L1 influence throughout the 1960s (R. Ellis, 2008: 359–361).

As a reaction to the shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis, a series of studies called the morpheme order studies became in the early 1970s highly influential in the field of Second Language Acquisition (Gass & Selinker, 1994: 79). From the first morpheme order study conducted by Brown in 1973, it was revealed that children acquiring English as their first language showed a natural order in the acquisition of the most frequently used English morphemes. Inspired by Brown's work, Dulay and Burt (1973; 1974) were the first to seek for natural sequences in L2 acquisition. Because the Chinese and Spanish child learners of English participating in their study appeared to follow a very similar order in the acquisition of morphemes and most errors were clearly developmental errors, the authors concluded that "it is the L2 system, rather than the L1 system that guides the acquisition process" (Dulay & Burt, 1974: 52). In the literature, the assumption that L2 acquisition follows the same path as L1 acquisition is generally referred to as the L2 = L1 hypothesis (cf. R. Ellis, 2008: 54; 105–109). In contrast to Contrastive Analysis, the morpheme order studies thus emphasized that L2 acquisition was determined by universal developmental processes rather than by L1 transfer (R. Ellis, 2008: 361–362). The behaviourist position advocated by Contrastive Analysis and the minimalist position advocated by the
morpheme order studies are basically opposite extremes in terms of the role they attribute to the L1. While the former approach argues in favour of an exclusive role for the L1, the latter assumes that universal developmental processes are the ultimate factor. Obviously, their respective positions that the L2 acquisition process is ultimately affected by the L1 and that L1 background has not a single effect at all were both too strong (Sauter, 2002: 3).

In retrospect, it has not been particularly fortunate that the initial study of L1 influence was grounded in behaviourism. As behaviourist theories fell out of favour, researchers namely also started to ignore the significance of L1 influence because of its strong associations with the transfer of habits. As a response to behaviourism, the view on the role of the L1 subsequently changed to the opposite extreme (Odlin, 1989: 22–23; R. Ellis, 2008: 363). It was not until the late 1970s that the SLA research community generally came to realize that Second Language Acquisition was a far richer phenomenon than a mere struggle to overcome L1 habits. This change took place through the efforts of a small group of SLA researchers that continued to work on L1 influence and never lost sight on its significance (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 10). From then onward, researchers came to realize that the notions of L1 influence and universal developmental processes were not incompatible, and L1 influence came to be considered as an important phenomenon affecting L2 acquisition rather than the ultimate source of learner errors (R. Ellis, 2008: 363–366).

Accordingly, the reappraisal of the role of the L1 in Second Language Acquisition led to an important shift of attention from the mere documentation of instances of L1 influence to the more fundamental study of what makes L1 influence likely or not likely to occur in the first place (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 174). Rather than aiming at either a mere acceptance or rejection of the role of the L1, the ultimate goal of the study of L1 influence became to determine and to seek to explain how and when learners put their prior linguistic knowledge to use (Gass & Selinker, 1994: 89). The broadened scope of research on L1 influence as well as the recognition of L1 influence as a phenomenon worthy of investigation in its own right has probably been one of the most important developments in the history of the study of L1 influence, as it has led to a better understanding of the nature of the phenomenon and the myriad ways in which it –in addition to errors– can manifest itself (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 4, 174). The change in the nature of the study of L1 influence paved the way for the reconceptualization of L1 influence as a complex cognitive phenomenon that is greatly affected by learners’ perceptions and mental associations (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 13). Kellerman
(1979) was the first to lead the field to this new perspective and to place the study of L1 influence within a cognitive domain and he has, consequently, inspired many researchers (e.g. Ringbom, 1987; 2007) to also approach L1 influence from a cognitive point of view. As in this dissertation, L1 influence will also be approached as a cognitive phenomenon that takes place in the minds of individuals, the cognitive perspective on L1 influence will be elaborated on in section 3.5.

Unlike its early days, the study of L1 influence has after the 1970s largely been conducted independently of a specific theoretical framework (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: ix), with the exception of a distinct series of studies conducted within the generativist framework. From the 1980s onward, several SLA researchers have namely approached the second language acquisition process from the perspective of the Principles and Parameters theory, which was proposed by Chomsky in 1981. Belonging to the tradition of generative linguistics (Chomsky, 1959), the Principles and Parameters theory essentially assumes the existence of an innate Universal Grammar (UG). Universal Grammar consists of an abstract set of linguistic principles that do not constitute the actual rules found in a single language but rather function as constraints on the form that these parameters can take (R. Ellis, 2008: 582–583). When applying the Principles and Parameters theory to SLA, the essential questions are whether L2 learners can still access their UG and whether or not the L1 parameter settings are carried over to the L2. Schwartz and Sprouse (1996) claim for example that the L1 parameter settings form the L2 initial state and that the initial parameter settings can be reset to those of the L2. This position is generally referred to as Full Transfer - Full Access. Altogether, researchers take six positions, which vary with respect to the access to the UG (full access - partial access - no access) and the role they attribute to L1 influence (full transfer - partial transfer - no transfer) (cf. Sauter, 2002: 4–17; Odlin, 2003). Although generative approaches to SLA naturally take the role of the L1 into account, their primary aim is not to gain insight into the phenomenon of L1 influence as such, but to explain whether or to what extent L2 acquisition differs from L1 acquisition in terms of the possibility of parameter (re-)setting. As a consequence, the role of the L1 naturally has to be taken into account, because - as R. Ellis puts it - "no theory of L2 acquisition that ignores the role of the L1 can be considered complete" (R. Ellis, 2008: 402).

As a consequence of the changing theoretical perspectives on the role of the L1 in SLA and the long history of interdisciplinary interest in L1 influence outlined in the preceding, a broad range of terms has been used to refer to the
phenomenon in question, including *interference, transfer, first language influence* and *crosslinguistic influence*. All of these terms were introduced at different points throughout the history of the study of L1 influence. Although some of them are occasionally or generally used interchangeably, all terms differ to a certain extent in meaning and scope. As none of the terms is, moreover, without controversy, this might probably explain why researchers even today are continuously seeking for the better alternative and do not all use one and the same term. Depending on changing insights or slight changes in research scope, one and the same scholar may even not always use the same term.

The term *interference* is probably the oldest among all terms and was for example used by Lado (1957) to refer to the role of the L1 in SLA. Although later on the terms *transfer* and *interference* have occasionally been used as synonyms, there is a clear semantic difference between them. *Interference* namely implies no more than what *negative L1 transfer* does, while *transfer* can concern both the negative and positive effects of the role of the L1 (Odlin, 1989: 26). The behaviourist term *transfer* was also first put to use in the heydays of Contrastive Analysis but, unlike interference, it has been in use ever since. However, *transfer* is nowadays not understood as simply the transfer of habits (Odlin, 1989: 25), for it is actually widely accepted that language transfer is not just a matter of falling back on a previously acquired language in such a straightforward way (R. Ellis, 2008: 350). Yet, rather than carrying over surface forms or unanalyzed chunks from the L1 to the L2, transfer is viewed as involving the analysis of L1-L2 patterns (cf. Ringbom, 1987: 51).

As the term *transfer* is nowadays a rather neutral term without any behaviourist connotations, it is widely used in recent and less recent work on the role of the L1 (e.g. Kellerman, 1979; 1995; Odlin, 1989; Jarvis, 2010). The term is presently often used as an equivalent to the term *L1 influence*, since both terms cover both sides of the effects of the first language on the second, regardless of whether resulting in target-like or non-target-like L2 performances (Kaivapalu & Martin, 2006). However, *L1 influence* does not limit itself to the transfer of L1 elements, but it also covers possible other effects emerging from the role of the L1 in SLA such as avoidance of and preference for certain L2 elements. The term *L1 influence* is for example utilized in Jarvis’ (2000) publication, but Corder introduced the term already in 1983 as *mother tongue influence*. Corder’s purpose was to provide an alternative for *transfer* which was in those days still strongly associated with behaviourism.
For the same reason, Kellerman and Sharwood-Smith (1986) came up with the term *crosslinguistic* influence, which is in fact an umbrella term not only for all kinds of effects but also for all kinds of interactions between languages, including the influence of the second language on the first (cf. Cook, 2003) and crosslinguistic effects on third language acquisition (cf. Cenoz, Hufeisen & Jessner, 2001). Knowledge of three or more languages can namely possibly lead to three or more different kinds of language transfer (Odlin, 1989: 27).

Although *transfer* and *crosslinguistic influence* are presently conventionally used in the literature, Cook (2002: 18) criticizes the terms because they imply transfer or influence from the one language to the other rather than a gradual accommodation between L1 and L2 knowledge. Without actually implying distinct L1 and L2 systems, they definitely do not imply the opposite. The same critique could also be said to apply to *L1 influence*, but as more alternatives are not available in the literature on the study of L1 influence and it is virtually impossible to avoid all controversy in the terminology of such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, there is no need to come up with yet another term in this dissertation.

As for the influence of the first language on the second, *L1 influence* is probably the most appropriate among all used terms, since the term is broad and specific at the same time. It namely restricts itself to the influence of the first language, simultaneously covering the whole range of outward effects (facilitation, inhibition, avoidance and preference). A schematic representation of the notions of transfer, L1 influence and crosslinguistic influence approached from the perspective of the L1 is provided in figure 5. Throughout this dissertation, the term *L1 influence* will be used to refer to the phenomenon of the influence of the first language on the second. The term *transfer* will only be used in those contexts that benefit from a more specific denotation.
3.2 Evidence of L1 influence

L1 influence has been evidenced to affect all linguistic subsystems (Odlin, 1989; see pg. 48–127 hereof for a thorough coverage of the role of the L1 in all areas of language use). The importance of L1 influence has particularly long and widely been acknowledged in the areas of phonology and semantics, while researchers have long doubted the existence and importance of morphological and syntactic L1 influence (Odlin, 2003: 437). The scepticism toward morphological and syntactic L1 influence has, however, proved to be more and more unwarranted and its persistence has probably been due to a lack of understanding of the ways in which L1 influence can manifest itself and either a failure to identify instances of L1 influence obscured by other variables (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 92) or a failure to comprehend that such an interaction does not take away from the significance of L1 influence itself.

In this section, an overview will be provided of studies indicating the existence and importance of morphological and syntactic L1 influence, as these types of L1 influence are of particular interest to this dissertation. Throughout this section, it should become evident that instances of morphological and syntactic
L1 influence generally result from complex interactions between crosslinguistic similarities and various other variables. In this vein, it will also be discussed that syntactic L1 influence has for example been found to be affected by developmental variables, a finding that remarkably even led Odlin (1989: 111) to question whether syntactic L1 influence was of the same importance as for example phonological L1 influence.

In later work, Odlin nonetheless states that researchers claiming that the L1 plays a substantially less significant role in L2 syntax than in L2 phonology in fact presuppose that it can be reliably measured to what extent the L1 contributes to the development of each linguistic subsystem. As also noted by Schachter (1974), such a way to determine the relative contribution of the L1 to the different L2 subsystems does not exist, as syntactic structures are often relatively rare in comparison with phonological features. These differences in occurrence are mainly due to the fact that syntactic features are often optional, while the phonemes of a particular word cannot be omitted in a similar vein. As a consequence, meaningful comparisons between the impact of the L1 in L2 phonology, L2 syntax and the other L2 subsystems cannot be drawn (cf. Odlin, 2003: 439–440).

3.2.1 Evidence of morphological L1 influence

As already touched upon in the preceding, one of the widespread beliefs about the morphological L1 influence has been that morphology is immune to transfer (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 92). However, the transfer of inflectional morphemes has recently been found to occur particularly frequently in the case of morphologically similar languages (e.g. Kaivapalu, 2005), suggesting that the L1 does play a role in L2 inflectional morphology that is considerably more positive than previously has been argued (Kaivapalu & Martin, 2007).

Along with its evidence for the occurrence of morphological L1 influence, Kaivapalu’s study is of particular importance to this dissertation because of its focus on Estonian learners of Finnish. Kaivapalu (2005) namely explored the role of the first language in the acquisition of L2 morphology by comparing learners of Finnish from a closely related L1 background (Estonian) to learners from an unrelated L1 background (Russian). The participants were divided into beginning and advanced learners of Finnish. The study focused on plural noun inflection, which was investigated on the basis of several inflection tasks. The participants were not only administered oral and a written inflection tasks which required
them to produce the plural forms (partitive, illative and elative plural) of a set of nouns, but they also had to perform a narrative task designed to elicit the same plural noun forms. Considering the plural inflection of Finnish and Estonian nouns, the nouns involved in the inflection tasks represented a similarity-difference continuum ranging from nouns with a similar stem and a similar inflectional ending in Finnish and Estonian to nouns with a different stem and ending in either language. From the study, evidence was found for the occurrence of instances of both positive and negative morphological transfer. First, it was revealed that the Estonian learners of Finnish produced the most correct plural forms in the noun category most similar to Estonian nouns (similar stem – similar inflectional ending) and the least correct forms in the noun category least similar to Estonian. Additionally, the Russian learners of Finnish were out-performed by the Estonian learners and did not show a similar interaction between noun category and accuracy. In addition, positive morphological influence was found to be stronger in advanced than in beginning Estonian learners of Finnish, suggesting that positive morphological influence increases with foreign language proficiency. Conversely, negative morphological influence appeared to decrease with increasing foreign language proficiency. The outcomes of the study suggest that, as for closely related L1s and L2s such as Estonian and Finnish, the role of L1 influence in L2 morphology is considerably stronger than previously has been claimed. The findings do not only indicate that morphological transfer exists but also that it interacts with several other factors, including the strength of morphophonological cues and foreign language proficiency.

In addition to the overt transfer of L1 inflectional morphology as evidenced by Kaivapalu (2005), among others, it has been shown that morphological L1 influence can also be based on L1-L2 correspondences between inflectional morphemes and non-inflectional constructions expressing the same underlying semantic meaning. This finding suggests that the scope of morphological L1 influence extends far beyond the transfer of overt inflectional morphology (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 93). In Sabourin, Stowe and De Haan (2006), the overt and non-overt influence of L1 morphology on the L2 are specifically termed: The transfer of overt linguistic features is called surface transfer, while the transfer of abstract underlying categories is termed deep transfer.

A study conducted by Jarvis and Odlin (2000) clearly illustrated how deep transfer of L1 morphology functions. In this study, Jarvis and Odlin (2000) examined the written English of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Finns with respect to reference to spatial relationships. The same writing task that was
administered to the groups of learners in English also had to be carried out by a Finnish and Swedish native-speaking control group in their L1s. The most conspicuous difference between both groups of learners appeared to be that in a situation in which both the English preposition *in* and *on* were acceptable and grammatically correct, the Finnish-speaking learners showed a clear preference for the English preposition *on*, whilst the Swedish-speaking learners preferred the preposition *in*. The authors interpreted this as a clear instance of L1 influence on the basis of a comparison with the control groups. To describe the same situation in Finnish, the Finnish control group namely used the Finnish locative suffix that corresponds to the English preposition *on* (i.e. allative case), whereas the Swedish control group showed a preference for the Swedish preposition *i* which corresponds to the English preposition *in*. The Finnish and Swedish learners’ patterns of spatial reference thus differed from each other but they were similar to their respective L1 patterns. These findings indicate that the Finnish learners of English are capable of establishing L1-L2 correspondences between the underlying semantics of Finnish bounded morphological suffixes and English unbounded prepositions.

In addition to the influence of the underlying semantics of L1 morphology on the use of L2 prepositions, Jarvis and Odlin (2000) also found evidence for indirect negative influence of L1 morphology on the importance learners attributed to prepositions in general. In a study on the use of English prepositions by Finnish and Swedish-speaking Finns, Jarvis and Odlin found multiple instances of prepositional omissions in the written English of the Finnish learners. They acknowledged these prepositional omissions as instances of L1 influence taking into account that in Finnish, spatial relations are generally not expressed by prepositions but by nominal suffixes. As a consequence, the lack of prepositions in Finnish could lead Finnish learners of English to overlook the need for using prepositions as spatial markers in English.

Similar findings as discussed by Jarvis and Odlin (2000) were also reported by Schumann (1986). As part of a research project on pidginization in early SLA, Schumann conducted a multiple case-study on the acquisition of locative and directional expressions in Chinese, Japanese and Spanish learners of English as a second language. The participants in this study were immigrants that had received little or no English language instruction. In their locative and directional expressions, the Chinese and Japanese learners were found to omit prepositions significantly more frequently than the Spanish learners. The Spanish learners appeared to use the English preposition *in* to express most locative meanings,
which Schumann explains as at least partially due to L1 influence, because the Spanish preposition *en* covers both the English prepositions *in* an *on*. Although Chinese and Japanese do not show a complete lack of adpositions, the Spanish prepositional system is substantially more similar to English. Together with an interaction between L1 influence and simplification strategies that are typical for pidginization processes, these crosslinguistic differences have obviously contributed to the differences between the learners. However, the evidence for the existence of morphological L1 influence provided by Schumann cannot be considered particularly strong because of the relatively small number of participants and because of the fact that the relative similarity between English, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese adpositions does not seem to be clear-cut which makes it difficult to draw strong conclusions.

Sabourin (2003) has, however, brought together many of the above mentioned issues on overt and non-overt influence of L1 morphology in a very well-designed study. By analyzing groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds, Sabourin investigated the role of the L1 in the acquisition of the Dutch grammatical gender system. The participants were native speakers of German, native speakers of English or native speakers of a Romance language (French, Italian or Spanish). With respect to grammatical gender, the learners' L1 backgrounds differed in that English does not have grammatical gender, the Romance languages have a grammatical gender system that is different from Dutch, and the German grammatical gender system differs from Dutch but comes from a system that is historically similar. The participants were administered two experimental tasks. The first task, in which the participants had to assign gender to Dutch nouns, did not reveal any significant differences between the learners and the control group consisting of native speakers of Dutch. However, the extent to which the L1 grammatical gender system was similar to Dutch was found to positively correlate with task accuracy. In the second experimental task, which focused on the agreement between the relative pronoun and its antecedent, all groups of learners appeared to score substantially lower than the control group. Although no significant differences were found between the groups of learners, the German learners clearly outperformed the Romance group, the Romance group scored substantially better than the English learners and the English group did not perform above chance. According to Sabourin, these research findings do not only indicate the existence of morphological L1 influence but they also suggest that morphological L1-L2 similarities (as existing between the German
and Dutch gender system) are of more importance than abstract L1 features concerning grammatical gender-marking.

The above discussed studies demonstrate that, despite previous widespread skepticism on the existence of morphological L1 influence, also morphology is clearly subject to transfer. Throughout the past few decades, opinions on the importance of morphological L1 influence may however have differed a great deal because instances of morphological L1 influence cannot always be easily identified (Martin, 2006). Instances of the influence of L1 morphology on the L2 can relatively easily be detected when they involve transfer of overt morphology. Nevertheless, when they involve learners’ subtle preferences for certain L2 language structures, they are far less salient and therefore far more difficult to identify (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 96). As a consequence, influence of L1 morphology can very easily be overlooked unless the L1 is morphologically very similar to the L2 (as Finnish to Estonian) or unless groups of learners from two or more L1 backgrounds are selected that represent a L1-L2 similarity-difference continuum with respect to morphological similarity and/or the phenomenon to be investigated (e.g. Kaivapalu, 2005; Sabourin, 2003).

### 3.2.2 Evidence of syntactic L1 influence

Like morphology, syntax has long been considered to be completely immune to L1 influence. However, as evidence of L1 influence has particularly since the 1980s been detected in various areas of syntax, including articles, relative clauses, adverbial placement and negation, the existence and importance of syntactic L1 influence can nowadays no longer be denied. Although in some cases studies providing evidence of syntactic L1 influence involve grammatical errors, in most cases they do not, and the fact that studies on L1 influence have historically concentrated on errors has undoubtedly played a significant role as to why syntactic L1 influence has so often been overlooked. Nonetheless, syntactic L1 influence can also be easily missed out in studies not focusing on errors, as instances of syntactic L1 influence that do not entail error are generally quite difficult to detect (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 99–102).

#### The omission of articles

Evidence of syntactic L1 influence that does involve grammatical errors has particularly been found in learners’ use of the English article system. This is for
obvious reasons. First, the use of articles by learners of English has been a frequently researched topic. Unlike languages with an elaborate article system, English furthermore has an article system merely consisting of the definite article the and the indefinite article a/an, so that non-target-like use is also expected to manifest itself in the form of omission.

Master (1987) investigated the acquisition of the English article system in learners from five different L1 backgrounds. With respect to article usage, the learners’ L1s could be divided into those that contain an article system (German and Spanish) and those that lack an article system (Russian, Chinese and Japanese). From the study, it was revealed that the development of the German and Spanish learners clearly diverged from that of the groups of learners of which the L1 did not contain articles, indicating that the L1 does at least at the early stages of foreign language learning play an important role in learners’ use of the English article system.

In a similarly designed study, Jarvis (2002) studied the use of the English article system in Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Finns. In the same manner as the languages in Master’s study could be discriminated, Swedish and Finnish also differ in that Swedish does and Finnish does not have an article system. Clearly influenced by the complete lack of articles in Finnish, the Finnish-speaking learners were found omit significantly more articles in written English narratives than their Swedish-speaking peers.

Congruence between L1 and L2 adverbial placement

The occurrence of L1 influence in the L2 acquisition of adverbial placement has already received attention since a well-designed study conducted by Selinker was published in 1969, and in more recent work, Alonso (2002a; 2002b) provided growing evidence suggesting that the L1 plays a significant role in L2 adverbial placement. In his investigation, Selinker (1969) studied the acquisition of word order in school-age Hebrew learners of English. From a series of interviews, it was revealed that the Hebrew learners were generally inclined to place adverbs directly after the verb (e.g. I like very much movies). By collecting comparable Hebrew and English L1 data, Selinker was able to demonstrate a significant relation between the learners’ adverbial placement in L2 English and between adverbial placement in the Hebrew L1 data. Based on the finding that the L2 data more strongly resembled the Hebrew L1 data than the English L1 data, Selinker
concluded that the Hebrew learners’ placement of English adverbs was strongly influenced by L1 syntax.

Although focusing on learners from a different L1 background, very similar results were obtained in a multiple-case study on adverbial placement in Spanish learners of English conducted by Alonso (2002a). The findings of one of these longitudinal case studies (based on the six-month tracking of a 15-year-old-Spanish learner of English) were discussed in detail in a subsequent paper (Alonso, 2002b). For her multiple case-study, Alonso conducted a series of elicitation experiments specifically designed to elicit comparable L1 and L2 data. On the basis of these data, Alonso compared the participants’ syntactic patterns of adverbial placement in L2 English to those of L1 Spanish. From these analyses, non-target-like adverbial placement (e.g. *I speak at home Spanish*) appeared to often result from syntactic L1 influence. L1 syntactic patterns were also revealed to have an influence on target-like adverbial placement: In cases of more than one alternative word order pattern, the learners generally tended to choose a pattern of adverbial placement frequently occurring in their L1.

**Avoidance and preference**

Importantly, some of the most robust evidence for the existence of syntactic L1 influence has been found in learners’ avoidance of certain syntactic structures and their preference for others. Although not only occurring at the level of syntax, R. Ellis (2008: 371) claims that avoidance and preference behaviour can especially be observed at the level of syntax, probably because learners are generally able to monitor their syntactic performance relatively well and because alternative syntactic structures are generally available to a large extent.

Given that avoidance and preference behaviour cannot easily be detected, Schachter’s paper *An Error in Error Analysis* (1974) has been an extremely valuable addition to the study of syntactic L1 influence. Reporting on a study on the use of relative clauses in Chinese, Japanese, Persian and Arabian learners of English, Schachter was namely the first to bring to light the phenomenon of avoidance and to conclude that error analysis did not provide a complete picture of the role of the L1 in L2 syntax. In her study, Schachter initially predicted that the Chinese and Japanese learners of English would have more difficulties with English relative clauses than Persian and Arabian learners, because in Chinese and Japanese relative clauses appear to the left of the head noun, while in English, Persian and Arabic they occur to the right.
Contrary to these predictions, the Chinese and Japanese learners were nevertheless found to produce significantly fewer errors in their use of relative clauses than their Persian and Arabian counterparts. By subsequently analyzing the total number of relative clauses, Schachter however found out that the Chinese and Japanese learners had also produced significantly fewer relative clauses than the other groups of learners. These findings led Schachter to conclude that the Chinese and Japanese learners’ relative difficulty in using relative clauses did not manifests itself in a larger number of errors but rather in avoidance of the structure in question. By making this claim, Schachter was thus the first to point out the importance of focusing not only on errors but also on those forms or structures consistently avoided by the learner, hereby bringing to light the phenomenon of avoidance.

**The developmental sequence of negation**

In the early 1980s, researchers generally agreed that L2 learners followed a certain invariant developmental sequence in their acquisition of the syntax of negation (cf. R. Ellis, 2008: 92–93). As it had already become known that a similar invariant developmental sequence also occurred in L1 acquisition and that its earliest stages also occurred in creoles and pidgins (cf. Schumann, 1978), researchers in those days generally assumed that the acquisition of negation was not influenced by a learners’ L1 background but by general developmental principles only (Odlin, 1989: 105–106).

Among others, Hyltenstam (1977) was one of the researchers that provided evidence suggesting that a learner’s L1 background did not play a role in the acquisition of negation. From his study on the acquisition of negation in learners of Swedish from 35 different L1 backgrounds, Hyltenstam found that, regardless of their L1 background, all learners went to the same stages of development in their acquisition of the Swedish syntactic patterns of postverbal negation. Nevertheless, Hammarberg (1979) examined the same data in more detail in order to verify whether no differences at all could be detected between the different groups of learners. Although Hammarberg found evidence confirming Hyltenstam’s conclusion that all learners went to the same acquisitional sequence, he also revealed that some groups of learners went through these developmental stages more quickly than others. According to Hammarberg, this increased progress in the acquisition of Swedish negation patterns exhibited by some learners was clearly influenced by their L1 background. Those groups of learners
from L1 backgrounds with postverbal negation went for example much quicker through the acquisitional stage of preverbal negation than groups of learners of which the L1 had preverbal negation. These findings clearly seem to indicate that the L1, rather than playing no role at all, does considerably influence learners’ progress through developmental stages.

Along with Hammarberg, a number of researchers have provided growing evidence indicating that a learner’s L1 background can considerably influence the acquisition of the syntax of negation (cf. Odlin, 1989: 105–108; Meisel, 1997). The most valuable insight into this matter has probably been that syntactic L1 influence is developmentally constrained in the sense that it cannot be observed until the learner has reached a certain stage of development (R. Ellis, 2008: 394). This also explains why negation, along with all other components of syntax, has long been thought not to be subject to L1 influence. According to Odlin (1989: 108), the earliest developmental stages in the acquisition of negation are just too similar for L1 influence to be evident, since initial negation patterns are structurally that simple that they naturally turn out to be remarkably alike across languages.

3.2.3 Evidence of L1 influence from Finnish- and Swedish-speaking learners of English

Much research has been carried out to explore differences in the acquisition of English as a foreign language by Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners. The onset of the investigation of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English is generally dated back to the mid-1970s, when Håkan Ringbom initiated a large research project concerning these learner populations at Åbo Akademi (the Swedish University of Finland).

According to Ringbom (e.g. 1987; 2007), the language situation in Finland is most appropriate for studying SLA and third language acquisition. Finland has namely two official languages, Finnish and Swedish. Of the Finnish population, 93% are native speakers of Finnish and 6% native speakers of Swedish. Although Finnish and Swedish are genetically and typologically very different languages, the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Finns are culturally and educationally as close as any two population groups can be.

As expected, the investigation of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Finns learning a common foreign language (English) has provided valuable insights into the general differences between learning a related and an unrelated
L2. Nonetheless, Ringbom (1987: 80–109; 2007: 41–51) not only presented the main results of his own project and follow-up research but he also provided an extensive overview of other comparative studies of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners, ranging from primary school pupils with limited proficiency in English to university students majoring in English. Varying from data collected from narrative elicitation tasks to data collected from word and text translation tests and standardized exams, the most important source of data were large collections of English Matriculation Examination tests. These tests were part of the Finnish Matriculation Examination, which is a national exam taken at the end of upper secondary school. Matriculation Examinations in English language also constituted the major data source in Ringbom’s own investigations.

The studies outlined by Ringbom (1987: 80–109; 2007: 41–51) indicated largely similar patterns and they all led to the conclusion that Swedish-speaking Finns have an advantage over Finnish-speaking Finns when it comes to the acquisition of English as a foreign language. At various levels of foreign language proficiency, Swedish-speaking Finns were revealed to make fewer errors than Finnish-speaking Finns and to do better on the whole. Although not investigated as thoroughly as L2 English, similar advantages were found for Swedish-speaking learners of respectively French (Elo, 1993) and German (Sajavaara & Takala, 1993) as compared to Finnish-speaking learners. Nevertheless, the differences between the Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English appeared to be particularly conspicuous at early stages of foreign language learning; they were found to become less clear with increasing foreign language proficiency. Studies concerning university students majoring in English for example indicated that first year Swedish-speaking university students did still marginally better than their Finnish peers. The differences were, however, generally not as clear as in studies of school-level English. At university-level, the main differences between Swedish and Finnish-speaking Finns were found to concern the use of articles and prepositions.

According to Ringbom (1987; 2007) the research findings altogether suggest that, unlike Finnish learners of English, Swedish-speaking learners can from the outset rely on their L1 for the essential facilitation of foreign language learning. The greater success of the Swedish-speaking learners thus seems to be mainly due to positive L1 influence, suggesting an overwhelmingly facilitative L1 effect. The positive effects of having a closely related L1 thus appear to be far more significant than the few years of English language instruction and class-room exposure to English language shared by the Swedish and Finnish speaking
learners of English. However, the higher the L2 proficiency, the smaller and less apparent the differences become, indicating that positive L1 influence decreases and becomes less significant with increasing L2 proficiency. The L1 thus clearly exerts a stronger influence on foreign language learning in the initial than in the later stages of learning, indicating an inverse relation between L1 influence and L2 proficiency.

A set of recent studies (Meriläinen, 2006; 2010) builds on Ringbom’s work in that Matriculation Examinations from 1990 onwards were used to explore negative influence of L1 syntax and the L1 lexicon in Finnish learners of English as a foreign language. In her 2006 study, Meriläinen analyzed the L1-induced lexical errors made by Finnish-speaking Finns in the Matriculation Examinations of 1990 and 2000. About half of the errors in her corpus (approximately 60,000 words) were found to be semantic extensions, loan translations, collocational errors or prepositional errors. The other half included orthographic errors, grammatical errors and language shifts. In her PhD dissertation, Meriläinen (2010) challenged the assumption that L1 influence is of minor importance in L2 syntax by diachronically exploring the occurrence of lexical and syntactic L1 influence in the written English of Finnish learners of English as a foreign language. Her research materials comprised 500 English Matriculation Examinations (1990, 2000 and 2005). From the study, not only was evidence found for both lexical and syntactic L1 influence but it was also revealed that effects of negative lexical transfer had significantly decreased from 1990 to 2005, while effects of negative syntactic transfer had become significantly stronger over time. According to Meriläinen, these findings indicate that Finnish students’ increased exposure to the English language has helped them to overcome negative transfer effects in certain areas of the L2 lexicon but not in their usage of L2 syntax, suggesting that in the case of a genetically and typologically different L1 the negative effects of L1 syntax are considerably more persistent than the negative effects of the L1 lexicon.

3.2.4 Evidence of L1 influence from learners of Finnish

The studies on L1 influence outlined so far covered learners from a wide range of L1 backgrounds, but introspection revealed that the number of investigated target languages was much more limited. In fact, there appeared to be strong bias toward English as a target language, with only a limited set of studies focusing on other target languages, particularly on widely taught and spoken Indo-European
languages such as German, French and Dutch. The focus on English as a target language does not coincidentally become apparent, but it is very much a reflection of the overall picture - as also pointed out by Kaivapalu and Martin (2007).

Although the study of L1 influence has so far particularly focused on English as a target language, this does not automatically mean that L1 influence is a completely un-researched area in target languages other than English. When it comes to small-scale studies on less widely taught and spoken languages such as Finnish, the findings from such studies are however often published on a smaller scale so that they may not reach the international research community. In this section, a series of small-scale studies focusing on learners of Finnish and Estonian will be outlined. Notwithstanding that these studies generally involved a limited amount of data or a limited number of participants so that no statistical tests were conducted, the studies are nevertheless relevant in that some of them particularly focus on object case-marking in Finnish learner language and in that all of these small-scale studies either list possible instances of L1 influence or also provide proportional occurrences. Because of the limited size of the studies they generally focus on negative L1 influence (i.e. errors) rather than on positive L1 influence that can be detected by comparing groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds.

*Learners of Finnish from a wide range of L1 backgrounds*

Just as English Matriculation Examinations served as the data for the series of studies on Swedish-speaking and Finnish-speaking students of English, data collected from the Finnish as a Second Language Test included in the Finnish Matriculation Examination were used to study learners of Finnish as a second language. Elo (2000), for example, investigated the syntactic skills of 45 learners of Finnish taking part in the Finnish as a Second Language Test. The data of the study consisted of the essays the students had to write as part of this test. The essays were written by students from 13 different L1 backgrounds. However, as most of the students were L1 speakers of Russian and Vietnamese, the essays were subdivided into essays written by L1 speakers of Russian, L1 speakers of Vietnamese and learners from L1 backgrounds other than Russian and Vietnamese. The study showed that all three groups of learners experienced difficulties with the case-marking of the object, the use of locative cases and the use of possessive suffixes. The Russian learners produced proportionally more
tense-related errors than the learners from the remaining L1 backgrounds. Elo argued that the large amount of tense-related errors made by the Russian learners of Finnish could at least partly be attributed to the fact that, unlike Finnish, Russian only has a simple past and not present perfect or past perfect tense. The Vietnamese learners of Finnish produced proportionally more word order errors than the learners from the remaining L1 backgrounds. According to Elo, the Vietnamese learners often resorted to L1 word order patterns.

A very similar study was conducted by Manninen and Martin (2000), with the difference being that essays of students from five different L1 backgrounds (i.e. Estonian, Russian, Swedish, English and Vietnamese) were selected from the Finnish Matriculation Examination. As for each of these L1 backgrounds, the ten essays that were rewarded the lowest pass grades were selected. When comparing the average grades awarded to the essays written by the different groups of learners, the Estonian learners had received the highest grades, closely followed by the Russian learners. Although the Swedish learners had made fewer errors than their Estonian and Russian peers, they received lower grades for their essays. The average grades awarded to the Swedish learners and the English learners were in fact comparable, although the English learner had produced significantly more errors. According to the authors, the lack of correlation between the grades awarded to the Swedish learners and the number of errors made by them can be explained by taking into account the nature of the errors. The Swedish learners had namely made many agreement errors that hindered understanding. The Vietnamese learners of Finnish did not only receive lower grades than all other groups of learners but their essays were also characterized by the largest number of errors. The outcomes of the study seem to suggest a positive correlation between typological L1-L2 similarity and student performances on the Finnish as a Second Language Test. Not only did the Estonian learners perform better than all other groups of learners but also the Russian learners outscored the students from morphologically less rich L1 backgrounds. Notwithstanding this, it should be taken into consideration that the Vietnamese learners of Finnish were at disadvantage, because they were all refugees who were less educated than the other students.

Object case-marking in learners of Finnish

Covering learners of Finnish from a range of L1 backgrounds, several studies focused on the case-marking of the object. Martin (2002) studied object case-
marking in Italian learners of Finnish. As the data of this study, 88 essays written by Italian students of Finnish as a foreign language were used. Considering the object errors observed from these data, it was found that only 10% of the partitive objects were used incorrectly, whereas restrictive objects were substantially more often used incorrectly. The resultative verbs *viedä* (‘to bring’), *vuokrata* (‘to rent’), *saada* (‘to receive’), *ostaa* (‘to buy’), *otta* (‘to take’) as well as the quasi-resultative verb *nähdä* (‘to see’) were in more than three cases incorrectly combined with a partitive object. Similarly, the irresultative verbs *harrastaa* (‘to practice’), *auttaa* (‘to help’), *odottaa* (‘to wait’), *opiskella* (‘to study’), *rakastaa* (‘to love’), *ymmärtää* (‘to understand’) and *puhua* (‘to speak’) were in more than three cases incorrectly used with a restrictive object. With respect to ambivalent verbs, the Italian learners experienced most difficulties with the object case-marking of the verbs *kirjoittaa* (‘to write’), *syödä* (‘to eat’), *juoda* (‘to drink’), *oppia* (‘to learn’) and *tarvita* (‘to need’).

Muikku-Werner (2002) analyzed a set of oral interviews and role-play data produced by Estonian and German learners of Finnish on object case-marking. From the study, it was found that both the Estonian and German learners of Finnish produced more partitive objects than restrictive objects. With respect to the proportion of correctly used partitive objects, there were no differences between the German and Estonian learners. Both groups of learners thus seemed to master the use of partitive objects equally well. Unlike the Estonian learners, the German learners did not only fail to produce large numbers of restrictive objects but they also used proportionally more restrictive objects incorrectly than their Estonian peers.

Kynsijärvi (2002) conducted a study on Russian learners of Finnish from the Karelian region of Petrozavodsk. The data of the study consisted of 63 essays written by third- and fourth-year students of Finnish. The students had thus already reached a relatively high level of L2 proficiency. Despite living in a mainly Russian-speaking environment, all of these students had at least to some extent additionally been exposed to one or more Finnic languages, since Karelian, Veps and even Finnish are also spoken in the Karelian region. From the study, it was revealed that the learners produced significantly more partitive than restrictive objects and that the vast majority of the object errors related to the object case alternation. Partitive objects were hereby more often replaced by restrictive objects than vice versa. Remarkably, the learners often appeared to replace partitive objects with allative and elative complements, which can probably be attributed to influence of Russian verb valency patterns. The
erroneously produced allative complements namely occurred in combination with verbs that require a dative complement in Russian, while the elative complements appeared to occur in combination with verbs that require a prepositional complement in Russian.

Unlike Martin (2002) and Muikku-Werner (2002), Kynsijärvi also took the subject and predicative case-marking into account. As for the case-marking of the subject, nominative subjects were found to occur substantially more frequently than partitive subjects and nearly half of the subject errors were found to be related to the subject case alternation. In most of these error cases, the nominative was incorrectly used as the case of the existential subject but the learners had also sometimes used the partitive as the case of the abstract subject of a non-existential sentence. Considering predicative case-marking, nearly all incorrectly used predicatives were shown to be related to the predicative case alternation in that partitive predicatives were replaced by nominative predicatives. In those marginal cases in which the partitive was incorrectly used as the case of the predicative, the sentence was often negated.

According to Kynsijärvi (2002), the outcomes of the study provide evidence suggesting that the Finnish language does not constitute a particular challenge to learners of Finnish from the Karelian region of Petrozavodsk. They not only seem to benefit from the fact that Russian and Finnish are both morphologically rich languages but also from the fact that several Finnic languages are spoken in their region. However, a shortcoming of Kynsijärvi’s study is that it has not been taken into account to what extent the students whose essays were analyzed could actually understand or speak Karelian or Veps. It would have added value to the study if the L1 backgrounds of the students would have been taken into account as a variable or if learners from the Karelian region and from a purely Russian-speaking environment would have been compared.

Estonian learners of Finnish as a foreign language

In several studies, Nissilä (1999; 2003) has found evidence suggesting that the close relatedness between Estonian and Finnish is both a help and a hindrance for Estonian learners of Finnish. While being a native speaker of Estonian facilitates the learning of Finnish as a foreign language on the whole, diverging L1-L2 structures and patterns can at the same time lead to instances of negative L1 influence.
The purpose of Nissilä’s (1999) study on the use of verb valency patterns by Estonian learners of Finnish was to explore which valency patterns are the most difficult for Estonian learners of Finnish. Finnish and Estonian verb valency patterns are namely often similar but they may also differ. In order to investigate this, she administered an elicitation task to 33 Estonian university students of Finnish as a foreign language. From the analysis, it was found that the category of verbs requiring an elative complement in Finnish and a partitive object in Estonian elicited the largest number of incorrect responses. In these cases, the learners had often transferred the Estonian pattern to Finnish because they erroneously assumed that the Finnish and Estonian patterns were identical. With respect to the Finnish construction *nauttia luonnosta*-Elat.Sg (‘enjoy nature’), the elative complement was for example found to be replaced by a partitive object (i.e. *nauttia luontoa*-Part.Sg) in accordance with the equivalent Estonian construction.

It was furthermore revealed that in the case of crosslinguistic differences, the Estonian learners had fewer difficulties with the valency patterns of high-frequent verbs. The frequently occurring Finnish verb *pitää* (‘to like’) for example requires an elative complement and although the same construction is expressed differently in Estonian (*minulle*.All.Sg *meeldib* Lit.: ‘to me it is pleasing’), the Estonian learners hardly made any errors concerning the valency pattern of the verb *pitää*. Because the study indicated that even university students with a relatively good command of Finnish make errors with respect to verb valency patterns, Nissilä nevertheless argued that there is a need to improve educational materials and to discuss valency patterns more thoroughly and systematically when teaching Finnish to Estonian learners or when teaching Estonian to Finnish learners. By systematically comparing Finnish and Estonian verb valency patterns, it could be avoided that learners generalize the apparent similarity of closely related language to all parts of the target language.

In another study by Nissilä (2003), the lexical skills of Estonian learners of Finnish were investigated by administering a translation task to nine Estonian-speaking and nine Russian-speaking Estonian learners of Finnish. Although Estonian was not their native language, the Russian-speaking learners had all acquired Estonian as a second language. The items of this translation task were divided into four categories representing the crosslinguistic similarity-difference continuum listed below. Category 1 lexical items were hereby assumed to be the easiest to translate for the Estonian learners and category 4 lexical items the hardest.
1. One-to-one correspondence between the Finnish lexical item and its Estonian equivalent
2. The Finnish lexical item has two or more equivalents in Estonian
3. The Estonian lexical item has two or more equivalents in Finnish
4. Finnish lacks an equivalent of the Estonian lexical item

From the study, it was revealed that the Estonian-speaking learners not only outscored the Russian-speaking learners on all four categories but they also produced significantly more correct translations on category 1 lexical items than on the remaining categories. Overall, the Estonian-speaking learners translated 73% and the Russian-speaking learners 49% correctly. Remarkably, the Russian-speaking learners produced more incorrect translations that could be attributed to influence of Estonian than the Estonian-speaking learners themselves (11.1% versus 6.3%). The study thus not only provided evidence suggesting positive influence of the first on the second language (i.e. the native speakers of Estonian outperformed the native speakers of Russian) but also of negative influence of the second on the third language (i.e. of the Russian-speaking learners’ L2 knowledge of Estonian).

Heikkilä-Kopperoinen (2003) studied the use of demonstrative pronouns by Estonian learners of Finnish as a foreign language. The purpose of this study was to explore difficulties in the use of demonstrative pronouns and to identify possible instances of negative L1 influence. In order to investigate this, a questionnaire was administered to 21 Estonian learners of Finnish and a control group consisting of Russian learners of Finnish. The Finnish demonstrative pronoun system is considerably more extensive than that of Estonian. The Estonian pronoun see (‘this; that’) has three equivalents in Finnish, i.e. tämä (‘this’), tuo (‘that’; concrete) and se (‘that’; abstract). From the study, it was first revealed that the Estonian learners produced significantly fewer errors than the control group. Considering the error patterns in detail, it was however found that the vast majority of errors made by the Estonian learners were substitutions of the demonstrative pronouns tämä and tuo by the pronoun se. The pronoun tuo turned out to be particularly problematic for the Estonian learners of Finnish. In contrast, less clear error patterns were observed from the control group consisting of Russian learners of Finnish. The findings of this study suggested that although the Estonian learners did significantly better than their Russian peers their erroneous use of demonstrative pronouns was clearly affected by their L1.
In a small-scale study, Muikku-Werner (2003) analyzed texts written by Russian learners of Finnish as a second language. The texts were written by ten Russian learners of Finnish who had attended several Finnish language courses in Finland on the basis of which they were considered advanced learners of Finnish. From the analysis, instances of negative L1 influence were observed at the semantic, orthographic and (morpho)syntactic level. As a clear example of negative L1 influence, Muikku-Werner discusses the error example *auttaa toiselle-All.Sg (‘help the other’) in which the partitive object of the Finnish verb auttaa (‘to help’) has been replaced by an allative complement. According to Muikku-Werner, the choice for this allative complement has been motivated by the dative valency of the equivalent Russian verb, as the Russian dative and Finnish allative have similar thematic roles.

On the basis of oral interviews and role-play data, Muikku-Werner (2004) investigated the use of negation by German and Estonian students of Finnish as a foreign language. The data were collected at two points in time, i.e. after three and nine months of study. The group of German learners of Finnish consisted of 16 and the group of Estonian learners of 15 participants. In German, negation is expressed by adding the postverbal negation particle nicht (‘not’) to the sentence, while in both Finnish and Estonian, negation is expressed by means of the negation verb ei followed by the stem of the main verb (e.g. Finnish: Hän ei tule versus Estonian: Ta ei tule ‘He does not come’). The Finnish negation verb is nevertheless marked for person, while the Estonian negation verb remains uninflected for person. Therefore, the Estonian negation verb always must be preceded by a personal pronoun (e.g. Finnish: Emme tule versus Estonian: Meie ei tule ‘We do not come’). From the study, it was found that the Estonian learners more frequently than the German learners left the negation verb uninflected. However, the German learners appeared to have considerably more difficulties in finding the correct stem form of the main verb than their Estonian peers. According to Muikku-Werner, the finding that the Estonian learners made more errors with respect to the negation verb than their German peers could be interpreted as an instance of negative L1 influence. Because the Finnish and Estonian negation patterns merely differ in that the negation verb remains uninflected in Estonian but not in Finnish, the Estonian learners probably often use L1 negation patterns in Finnish.

Because the German language is typologically different from Finnish and negation is in both languages expressed in a different manner, the German learners cannot draw upon their L1 knowledge and therefore apparently pay more
attention to the L2 rule that the negation verb must be inflected for person. Muikku-Werner found additional evidence for this explanation in that the German learners were even inclined to inflect the negation verb of possessive sentences (e.g. *Minulla en ole rahaa ‘I do not have money’), although the predicate of sentences of this type always appears in third person singular (i.e. Minulla ei ole rahaa). The finding that the Estonian learners produced fewer incorrect stem forms of the main verb was furthermore explained as an instance of positive L1 influence, since these forms are often fairly similar in Finnish and Estonian.

3.2.5 The interaction between L1 influence and L2 proficiency

In the discussion of studies providing evidence of morphological and syntactic L1 influence, it has already been noted that L1 influence is often affected by other factors such as L2 proficiency (cf. Kaivapalu, 2005, Ringbom, 1987; 2007) and developmental sequences (cf. Hammarberg, 1979). Among all factors that interact with L1 influence, second language proficiency is probably one of the most important and at the same time one of the most complex factors.

Although it is quite obvious that L2 proficiency affects the nature and the extent of the L1 influence that will occur and various studies have supported the widespread assumption that L1 influence decreases with gains in L2 proficiency (Odlin, 1989: 133–134), Jarvis (2000) showed that general research findings actually seem to contradict each other to a large extent. In addition to studies that indicate an inverse relation between L1 influence and L2 proficiency, he also discusses empirical studies that suggest several other directions that L1 transfer may take with increasing L2 proficiency. L1 influence has namely also been found to increase, to remain constant and to continuously fluctuate when L2 proficiency increases. Moreover, it has been revealed that when L1 influence clearly increases or decreases with increasing L2 proficiency, this development can be either linear or nonlinear. Altogether, Jarvis (2000: 246–247) thus assembled a list of six alternative ways in which L2 proficiency has been found to affect the nature and extent of L1 influence:
1. L1 influence decreases with increasing L2 proficiency
2. L1 influence increases with increasing L2 proficiency
3. L1 influence remains constant with increasing L2 proficiency
4. L1 influence ultimately decreases, but nonlinearly
5. L1 influence ultimately increases, but nonlinearly
6. L1 influence never decreases nor increases, but continually fluctuates as proficiency increases

According to Jarvis and Pavlenko (2010: 202–203), there are several reasons for the conflicting outcomes of previous studies on the relationship between L1 influence and L2 proficiency, which are largely attributable to the fact that not all researchers have approached the issue from a similar terminological or methodological perspective. As the effects of L2 proficiency on L1 influence largely depend on how L2 proficiency is defined and investigated, it is therefore very likely that widely varying results have been obtained.

Across the studies, there has first been considerable inconsistency as to how L2 proficiency was measured. While some researchers based their proficiency measures on various types of proficiency tests, others took for example length of residence or the amount of language instruction as a criterion. Also different ranges of proficiency levels were used in that some studies particularly concerned the lower and others the upper levels of L2 proficiency. Various studies thus used various starting points, not only toward definitions of proficiency but also toward L1 influence: While some studies only examined negative L1 influence, others have taken both the negative and positive effects of L1 influence into account. According to Odlin (1989: 133–134), this is one of the most important reasons for the confusion about the relationship between L1 influence and proficiency, because L2 proficiency does obviously not affect positive and negative L1 influence in a similar manner. Although negative L1 influence ultimately seems to decrease with increasing L2 proficiency (nevertheless generally nonlinearly and only to the point of stabilization), positive L1 influence may increase as learners become increasingly aware of L1-L2 similarities and acquire language abilities necessary for taking advantage of these crosslinguistic similarities, such as lexical and grammatical knowledge of the L2.

Furthermore, and of particular importance as this section aims to provide insights into the nature of morphological and syntactic L1 influence, the studies outlined by Jarvis (2000) largely varied as to which linguistic subsystem was investigated. Whereas some studies focused on lexical transfer, others for
example examined morphological or syntactic transfer. Because L1 influence can work differently in different areas of language, this has obviously led to different outcomes. (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 202–203). In this vein, a closer look at the studies cited in Jarvis (2000) shows that, when L2 proficiency increases, L1 influence has particularly been found to decrease at the level of morphosyntax, lexis and phonology, to increase at the level of morphosyntax, lexis and pragmatics and to either remain constant or continually fluctuate at the level of lexis and phonology (cf. Jarvis, 2000). When focusing on evidence of the interaction between L1 influence and L2 proficiency observed from studies on a particular linguistic subsystem, the directions that L1 influence can possibly take thus also naturally narrow down, providing clearer insights into potential interactional patterns. The following section will therefore specifically focus on the relationship between L1 influence and L2 proficiency as it has been observed at the level of (morpho)syntax.

**Evidence of an inverse relation between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency**

Several studies have provided evidence suggesting an inverse relation between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency. Supporting evidence for such a relationship has not only been found from different syntactic areas but also from different groups of learners. Dommergues and Lane (1976) administered, for example, a series of grammaticality judgments to a group of French learners of English. The materials involved in the grammaticality judgment task consisted of correct English sentences and sentences containing different types of grammatical errors. As a measure of foreign language proficiency, Dommergues and Lane used the proficiency scores obtained on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). From the study, a strong inverse relation was revealed between the learners’ mastery of English and the learners’ probability to accept ungrammatical sentences: Learners were more likely to accept ungrammatical sentences at the lower than at the upper levels of L2 proficiency.

Similar results were obtained from a study on the acquisition of word order in Turkish and Moroccan L2 learners of Dutch conducted by Jansen, Lalleman and Muysken (1981). In this investigation, both groups of learners particularly relied on their L1 at the lower levels of L2 proficiency. Reliance on the L1 word order patterns was, in contrast, found to be nearly absent at the upper proficiency levels. The negative influence of L1 syntax on the acquisition of
Dutch word order did thus not appear to be persistent, but its occurrence was mostly limited to the initial stages of foreign language learning. With gains in L2 proficiency, the word order patterns produced by the Turkish and Moroccan L2 learners became more and more alike, as they gradually developed into target-like word order patterns.

In his study on Spanish learners of English, Taylor (1975) not only provided evidence of an inverse relation between L1 influence and L2 proficiency but he also investigated the interaction between L1-based errors and those errors caused by the overgeneralization of L2 rules. Taylor based his error analysis on a translation task administered to Spanish learners of English at the elementary and intermediate level. The students were divided into these levels of proficiency according to placement test scores and their language instructors’ evaluations. As for the grammatical errors produced by the Spanish learners of English, there seemed to be a strong interaction between L1 influence (interlingual influence) and intralingual influence in that the beginning learners were found to make significantly more L1 induced errors than overgeneralization errors, while the intermediate learners produced significantly more overgeneralization errors than L1 induced errors.

According to Taylor, L1 influence and overgeneralization were merely two different manifestations of the same process: Reliance on prior linguistic knowledge to facilitate new learning: “With increased proficiency in the TL, learners rely proportionately less frequently on their L1 grammar, and more frequently on their ever-increasing knowledge of the TL, coping directly with it and overgeneralizing its rules” (Taylor, 1985: 88).

Evidence of a positive relation between positive L1 influence and L2 proficiency

In addition to an inverse relation between negative instances of morphosyntactic L1 influence and L2 proficiency, several studies have suggested that morphosyntactic L1 influence increases with gains in L2 proficiency. Among these researchers is Wolfgang Klein. Klein (1986: 27) states that the likelihood for positive syntactic L1 influence significantly increases with increasing L2 proficiency. He namely assumes that learners, along with growing linguistic knowledge of the L2, gradually acquire linguistic and metalinguistic abilities that are essential for taking advantage of grammatical knowledge of the L2. Klein exemplifies this by referring to the acquisition of tense in Basque learners of
German. In Basque, the position of the tense element is always clause-final, whereas the position of the tense element considerably varies in German. According to Klein, learners therefore have to be able to identify the German tense elements in order to become capable of adequately using tense in German. Klein believes that this ability gradually and naturally emerges as more L2 knowledge and metalinguistic knowledge is gained.

From an investigation on the development of syntax by adult learners of German from different L1 backgrounds (Klein & Perdue, 1993), it was furthermore revealed that learners’ initial development is largely affected by universal developmental principles: The syntactic development of the different groups of learners namely appeared to be remarkably similar. Instances of both L1 influence and over-generalization were not found to occur until the later stages of the foreign language learning process, which led the authors once again to conclude that L1 influence increases with increasing L2 proficiency.

In his study on negation placement in German learners of English, Wode (1978) discovered that instances of L1 influence could not be observed until the learners had reached a certain level of L2 proficiency. Because L1 influence appeared to be completely absent at the lower levels of L2 proficiency, Wode argues that these findings indicate that L1 influence does not start to appear until learners have reached a stage of development at which they become able to recognize the syntactic similarities between the L1 and L2 patterns of negation.

In a cross-sectional study, Hyltenstam (1984) investigated the formation of restrictive relative clauses in Greek, Persian, Spanish and Finnish learners of Swedish. Although the subjects had lived in Sweden for less than two years, they were considered advanced learners of Swedish on the basis of the amount of Swedish language instruction they had received (350–600 hours). The amount of Swedish language instruction was thus used as an indirect measure of L2 proficiency. The languages involved in the investigation varied according to whether or not they permitted resumptive relative pronouns. If English would permit resumptive pronouns (also called pronominal copies), the relative sentence *The girl that I gave the present to* would for example contain the resumptive pronoun *her* (i.e. *The girl that I gave the present to her*). Like English, resumptive pronouns are not allowed in Swedish, Spanish and Finnish. In contrast, Greek and Persian do supply resumptive pronouns. In their use of Swedish relative clauses, all groups of learners formed at least some sentences in which they made use of resumptive pronouns. Although being advanced learners, the occurrence of resumptive pronouns was however found to be significantly influenced by the
learners’ L1 background in that, followed by the Greek learners, the Persian learners made the most extensive use of resumptive pronouns.

3.2.6 The complex nature of morphological and syntactic L1 influence

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, prior linguistic knowledge of the L1 was long assumed to play a very limited role in L2 morphology and syntax, if any at all. The preceding section however demonstrated that the existence and importance of morphological and syntactic L1 influence can nowadays no longer be denied. Numerous studies have not only provided supporting evidence for morphological and syntactic L1 influence but also contributed to a deeper understanding of the nature of L1 influence occurring in these linguistic subsystems.

One of the core reasons why the role of the L1 in L2 morphology and syntax has often been underestimated is that it is particularly challenging to detect instances of L1 influence occurring at the level of morphology and syntax. Morphological L1 influence extends for example far beyond the transfer of overt inflectional morphology and can also manifest itself in the preference for those non-inflectional L2 constructions that have the same underlying meaning as L1 inflectional morphemes. In most cases, instances of syntactic L1 influence also manifest themselves in preference for certain structures and the avoidance of others. The previous focus on the analysis of errors has therefore undoubtedly led to cases where instances of syntactic L1 influence have been overlooked. The fact that syntactic L1 influence can also be obscured or affected by interacting factors has also led researchers to underestimate the importance of syntactic L1 influence.

Throughout the preceding section, it has been illustrated that L1 influence is affected by several other factors, such as developmental sequences and L2 proficiency. As for the interaction between morphosyntactic L1 influence and L2 proficiency, it has been shown that this relationship is, although already complex by itself, also affected by other interacting variables. In some cases, syntactic L1 influence can namely not occur until learners have reached a certain level of proficiency. Learners do for instance not start to use relative pronouns until they have developed the ability to form relative clauses, an ability that generally takes a long time to develop. Thus, until learners have reached the level of proficiency
at which they become capable of forming relative clauses, L1 influence concerning the use of relative pronouns cannot occur (cf. Odlin, 1989: 133).

Considering the relation between L1 influence and L2 proficiency in more detail, an attempt was made to bring down the six different interactional relations between L1 influence and L2 proficiency listed by Jarvis (2000) to those pertaining to morphosyntax. A closer look at those studies focusing on the role of the L1 on L2 morphosyntax has shown that, depending on whether being an instance of negative or positive L1 influence, L1 influence basically takes two possible directions: Negative L1 influence seems to ultimately decrease when L2 proficiency increases, while positive L1 influence seems to increase with gains in both L2 knowledge and metalinguistic knowledge.

3.3 On the relation between L1 influence, intralingual influence and simplification

Depending on what kind of linguistic knowledge the learner makes use of, a distinction can be drawn between L1 influence (or interlingual influence) and intralingual influence (Faerch & Kasper, 1980). Intralingual influence and L1 influence (or interlingual influence) differ in general terms in that the use of prior linguistic knowledge of the L1 may result in L1 influence, whereas the application of knowledge from within the target language may result in intralingual influence (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990: 33). Yet, L1 influence and intralingual influence hardly function differently and can consequently not always be disentangled (Ringbom, 1987: 60). This is because it cannot always be determined whether an incorrectly used target structure results from transfer from an L1 pattern, from overgeneralization of an target language pattern or from a combination between them (Altenberg, 2002).

Specifically, overgeneralization of a target language pattern means that the scope of the pattern in question is extended beyond its target-like boundaries. While there is a nearly endless list of studies on the role of the L1 in Second Language Acquisition, the phenomenon of intralingual influence has rarely been studied in its own right. As for the study of L1 influence, intralingual influence has sometimes been taken along, particularly when identifying L1 influence by means of error analyses. The classification of errors as either L1-induced or overgeneralization errors has often been used within the study of L1 influence. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of L1 influence remained in most cases the main object of study and the relation between L1 influence and intralingual influence...
has often received less attention than it may deserve. Taylors' (1975) study (also discussed in the preceding section in relation to the interaction between L1 influence and L2 proficiency) does briefly touch upon the interaction between the L1-induced and overgeneralization errors, which he characterized as two different manifestations of reliance on prior linguistic knowledge serving the common purpose of facilitating the foreign language learning process. With regard to the interaction with L2 proficiency, Taylor found that the beginning learners of English involved in his study made significantly more L1-induced errors than overgeneralization errors, while for intermediate students it was the other way around.

In the literature, it has often been suggested that intralingual influence does not predominantly occur during the early stages of Second Language Acquisition. According to Faerch and Kasper (1980), this is because learners can for example not form hypotheses about TL rules until they have some L2 knowledge at their disposal. In this respect, there is a certain line between overgeneralization and simplification. Along with the overgeneralization of grammatical rules, the process of simplification also works on the basis of knowledge (or eventually a lack of knowledge) of the target language. According to the definitions of Meisel (1980), the former term would even fall within the latter, as he distinguishes between two types of simplification. Meisel characterizes the use of grammatically reduced patterns -predominantly observed during the initial stages of L2 development- as restrictive simplification, while he describes elaborative simplification as attempts to form approximations of target language rules. Of these two types of simplification, the latter may thus result in the overgeneralization of target language rules. Meisel basically views simplification as a bidirectional process, as it not only serves the purpose of reducing grammar in a way that enables learners to deal with it but also reflects their attempts to master, practice and elaborate on grammar.

In the description of Schuman's (1986) multiple case study on pidginization in early SLA discussed earlier in this chapter, it was already mentioned that the interaction between L1 influence and restrictive simplification is typical for pidginization processes. However, restrictive simplification does certainly not only occur in the context of pidginization but has for example also been evidenced in the case of morphologically rich target languages. A set of studies on German learners of Finnish have for example also provided evidence for the occurrence of restrictive simplification.
Rinne (1996) conducted a case-study on the use of objects by an advanced German learner of Finnish as a second language. A two-hour interview served as the data for this study. A detailed analysis of the interview data showed, among other findings, that the German learner often appeared to use the basic uninflected form instead of either a partitive or genitive-accusative object. Rinne interpreted errors of this type as instances of restrictive simplification, since by using uninflected object forms the learner apparently either simply forgot to inflect the object or attempted to avoid the question of object case-marking. Also in a study conducted by Saarinen (1984), German learners of Finnish often appeared to use basic uninflected objects instead of partitive or genitive-accusative objects, regardless of the polarity of the sentence, the boundedness of the object noun phrase or the aspectual reading of the sentence.

3.4 The use of the Finnish partitive case as a learning target

Although not yet that much empirical research on the use of the partitive case in Finnish learner language has been conducted, Finnish language teachers have over the past decades abundantly addressed the partitive case in pedagogical articles and discussions. Classroom observations, teacher experiences and pedagogical considerations are generally being combined to gain insights into their students’ behaviour and to draw pedagogical and didactical implications. It is obvious that the partitive is often the subject of pedagogical work because teachers are continuously confronted with their students’ need to come to grips with the use of the partitive case. Hämäläinen (1996) accordingly mentioned that many learners of Finnish are constantly struggling with the use of the partitive and that especially advanced learners of Finnish are often desperately seeking to get to the bottom of the problem of Finnish partitive case-marking. As some of the rules concerning the case alternations are clearer than others, learners continuously produce object, subject and predicative errors (mostly overgeneralization errors) when trying to apply these rules. In line with this, Hämäläinen argues that all learners of Finnish form their own conception of the rules for partitive case-marking by combining their knowledge of Finnish with their own understanding of the Finnish partitive case. Consequently, Hämäläinen describes in her 1994 article that students often start to feel increasingly less confident about the use of the partitive as they become more proficient in Finnish. She argues that it nearly seems to be the case that the more rules and exceptions concerning partitive-case marking learners have been exposed to, the less certain
they become as to which contexts require a partitive object, a partitive subject or a partitive predicative.

A question that is naturally raised when objectively considering the above sketched circumstances is whether students’ persisting difficulties in using the partitive case are due to the quality of teaching or the quality of educational materials. Löflund (2001) addressed this question in a study on the use of partitive objects by Swedish-speaking Finns studying at the Swedish University of Finland (Åbo Akademi). The students at this university are either native speakers of Swedish or Swedish-Finnish bilinguals. From the study, it appeared that the case-marking of the object even remained problematic for balanced Swedish-Finnish bilinguals in that slight meaning differences between partitive and restrictive objects occasionally remain unnoticed by them, although they experienced substantially fewer difficulties than their Swedish-dominant peers. From extensive analyses on the basis of teaching observations and the available educational materials, he concluded that the difficulties Swedish-speaking Finns encounter are not due to the quality of teaching or educational materials but to the difficulty of object-case marking an sich. Löflund came to this conclusion because of his finding that even the balanced Swedish-Finnish bilinguals showed a lack of complete native competence in Finnish, although they did much better than their Swedish-dominant peers for whom the extensive amount of semantic and syntactic conditions involved in object case-marking constituted more of a challenge.

Elaborating on the complex rules for partitive case-marking, a subsequent question to be asked is obviously whether the difficulties learners of Finnish experience can be reduced by improving the educational materials or by changing the ways of teaching. A major concern that is continuously debated is therefore the way in which the use of the partitive case should be introduced and incorporated in language methods. Geber (1993) provides a thorough and critical discussion of the way in which existing Finnish language methods deal with this issue. In his discussion, Geber particularly addresses the order for teaching the rules for partitive case-marking, an issue that has often been put into question. In short, Geber argues that Finnish language teachers should start off from the NP-related function of the partitive case, subsequently proceed to introduce the partitive of negation, and discuss the rules for aspectual object case-marking last. The rationale to first introduce the NP-related function of the partitive is that this function is often considered the most concrete function of the partitive. The partitive of negation would subsequently not provide learners of Finnish with too
much of a burden because this function does not depend on semantic boundaries. As the rules for aspectual object case-marking are undoubtedly the most difficult to teach, Geber recommends that teachers start off from prototypical aspectual contrasts when reaching this function of the partitive case. Additionally, Geber specifically emphasizes that the case-marking of quasi-resultative verbs should explicitly be pointed out to Estonian and Russian learners of Finnish, since the L1 equivalents of verbs that are quasi-resultative in Finnish have different aspectual readings in Estonian and Russian.

Lauranto (1996) states that it is not due to the general principles concerning the case-marking of the aspectual object that the case-marking of the aspectual object constitutes one of the most challenging aspects of Finnish grammar, as the general principles for aspectual object case marking are not particularly difficult. Instead, he argues that the fact that there is no universal perception as to what is considered aspectually bounded or unbounded makes it difficult for learners to deal with the case-marking of the aspectual object. Taking into account that even between closely related languages such as Finnish and Estonian there are differences with respect to aspectual object case-marking, Lauranto argues that learners of Finnish can only overcome difficulties in expressing aspectual contrasts through extensive exposure to Finnish and by making extensive use of the language themselves.

Proceeding from the object case alternation toward partitive subjects as a learning target, it is often argued that in order to help learners of Finnish to overcome difficulties in the case-marking of subjects, the difference between basic and existential sentence should be taught from the beginning onward (Hämäläinen, 1996), and that it would definitely be fruitful to address differences between these sentence types in more detail (Hämäläinen, 1994). The difference between sentence types should then not only be approached from a morphosyntactic but also from a semantic perspective. The same view is also put forward by Siitonen (1996), who poses that the teaching of Finnish syntax to learners of Finnish would particularly benefit from the integrated teaching of syntactic aspects and their underlying semantics. According to both Hämäläinen and Siitonen, the teaching of subject case-marking would considerably benefit from providing learners with additional insights into the semantic notions of definiteness and aspect and by clearly explaining and exemplifying the semantic differences between basic and existential sentences.

Geber (1993) also addresses the question whether it would be the better alternative to successively introduce the nominative and partitive subject, or to
simultaneously introduce both types of subjects in order to emphasize their syntactic and semantic contrasts from the very beginning onward. With traditional teaching methods generally starting off from the nominative subject, it is namely not until the learner has been provided with some basic knowledge of Finnish that the partitive subject is being introduced. According to Geber, introducing the contrast between the nominative and the partitive subject from the very beginning onward would be a helpful way to make the students increasingly aware of definiteness, which is one of the notions essential to Finnish syntax. Since the nominative and the partitive case are the most frequently used cases in Finnish, this would further motivate the simultaneous introduction of the nominative and partitive subject. In line with this view, the prototypical sentence Mikä tama on? (‘What is this?’) should thus both in teaching and in educational materials always be contrasted with Mitä tämä on? (‘What is this?’) so that the difference between definite and indefinite entities can be pointed out to the learner from the very beginning onward.

Although the case-marking of the object and the existential subject are usually considered as the most challenging aspects of Finnish syntax, Forsman Svensson (1994) claims that the predicative case alternation may even constitute more of a challenge to learners of Finnish than the object and the subject case alternation. According to Forsman-Svensson, learners often tend to overgeneralize the principles for object and subject case-marking to the predicative, because the predicative case alternation does neither receive much attention in existing language methods nor are in these methods the principles for predicative case-marking sufficiently well explained. Educational materials should therefore be improved in that the principles for predicative case-marking should be more extensively discussed, and in that the differences between the case-marking of adjective and substantive predicatives should be clearly and explicitly pointed out to the learners. Geber (1993) agrees with Forsman-Svensson in that the predicative case alternation should deserve a more prominent position in Finnish grammars and that the case alternation should be dealt with in more detail in the language classroom.

Hämäläinen (1996) also notices that it is for example generally not explicitly pointed out to students that predicative case-marking is not affected by negative polarity. As negative polarity affects the case-marking of both the object and the existential subject, she argues that this might easily lead learners to erroneously assume that predicatives also assign partitive case in negated sentence contexts. Hämäläinen therefore argues that it would therefore be of importance to address
the differences between the predicative case alternation and the other case alternations and to explicitly provide learners with the rule that negative polarity does not affect the case-marking of the predicative.

Drawing upon her broad experience as a teacher of Finnish as a second language, Hämäläinen (1994) provided an overview of the most common error patterns exhibited by learners of Finnish when using the partitive case in written language. In her paper, Hämäläinen claims that the aspectual object case alternation appears to be the most problematic aspect of object case-marking. As the use of quasi-resultative verbs like nähdä (‘to see’) with partitive objects was observed as one of the recurring object error types concerning aspectual object case-marking, Hämäläinen suggested that learners apparently perceive the aspectual reading of quasi-resultative verbs differently than L1 speakers of Finnish. Another recurring error pattern she observed was that students were often inclined to use basic uninflected forms instead of either partitive objects or restrictive objects. Hämäläinen argues that errors concerning the use of partitive objects emerge because learners of Finnish do not only constantly have to keep the different case-marking rules in mind but also because they continuously need to decide whether a certain rule applies or not.

With respect to partitive subjects, Hämäläinen reported that her students particularly used partitive subject in co-occurrence with quantifying adverbs such as paljon (‘much’) and vähän (‘a little’). Importantly, these constructions do not only occur in existential sentences but they are also overgeneralized to basic intransitive and transitive sentences in which nominative plural quantifier such as monet (‘many’) should be used. Hämäläinen interprets the finding that her students often use partitive plural subjects in basic intransitive and transitive sentences as being possibly due to the fact that equivalent L1 expressions generally do not contain an article. In addition, she argues that students might consider partitive plural as more “plural-like” than nominative plural because the nominative plural case ending -t disappears when a possessive suffix is added. Considering the interrogative pronoun mikä (‘what’), Hämäläinen observed that her students seemed to be inclined to use the more frequently occurring partitive form mitä also in contexts requiring the nominative form (e.g. ei mitään auttanut ‘nothing helped’). This she interpreted as a kind of frequency effect.

Considering predicatives, it was reported that incorrectly used partitive predicatives often occurred in negated contexts, a finding Hämäläinen explained as an overgeneralization of the rules concerning objects and subject case-marking. Both the object and existential subject are namely assigned partitive case in
negated sentences. As for predicative errors occurring in affirmative sentences, these were observed as mostly involving the distinction between definite and indefinite entities. Hämäläinen claims that these errors are not only due to the fact that the notion of definiteness in general is difficult for learners, but also to the fact that no systematic rules can be indicated with respect to the case-marking of predicatives referring to an abstract entity.

3.5 Toward a general framework for addressing the use of prior linguistic knowledge in foreign language learning

3.5.1 Introduction

As briefly touched upon by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2010: ix), the study of L1 influence has from the late seventies onward largely been conducted independent of a comprehensive theoretical framework. Odlin (2003) furthermore not only claimed that the complex and broad nature of the phenomenon of L1 influence is the main reason why there does not exist any detailed theory of L1 influence (1989: 475) but also accordingly estimated that the complex nature of the phenomenon prevents a comprehensive theory of L1 influence to appear ‘any time soon’ (2003: 478).

R. Ellis (2008) put the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study of L1 influence into the broader perspective by stating that it will not be possible to develop a theory that addresses L1 influence in isolation. As the main reasons for this, he states that because of the fact that L1 influence is affected by factors of both internal and external nature, the role of the L1 can simply not be separated out from other factors involving development (pg. 399). Consequently, R. Ellis argues that the phenomenon of L1 influence needs to be incorporated into a general theory of SLA, preferably a cognitively-oriented one (pg. 397).

It is beyond the scope of this work to attempt to incorporate the study of L1 influence into one of the existing theoretical frameworks or to propose a tentative theoretical model for explaining L1 influence. Instead, the cognitive nature of L1 influence will be put in perspective and the phenomena of L1 influence and intralingual influence will be characterized as inherently related as much as to each other as to a learner's limited resources.
3.5.2 L1 influence as a cognitive phenomenon

In this dissertation, L1 influence is considered a cognitive phenomenon that takes place in the minds of individuals, a view that is for example advocated by Kellerman (1977; 1979 and Ringbom, 1987; 2007). Basic to a cognitive approach to the role of L1 influence is the learner’s perception of L1-L2 distance. The learner is seen as making decisions about which forms and functions of the L1 are appropriate candidates for use in the L2. Although crosslinguistic similarities and differences do not directly or exclusively determine which forms, functions or structures are transferred to the L2, these similarities and differences do play a central role in the learner’s decision-making process (Gass & Selinker, 2008: 486). In accordance with a cognitive approach to L1 influence, the learner is being placed at the centre of the foreign language learning process, rather than merely the learner’s language. In order to understand how prior linguistic knowledge of the L1 affects foreign language learning, it is of primary importance to identify how the learner relates his L1 to the target language (Gass & Selinker, 2008: 486).

In line with Kellerman’s (1979) psychotypology framework there are three general interacting factors that control L1 influence, i.e. a learner’s knowledge of the L1, a learner’s knowledge of the L2 and a learner’s perception of the distance between the L1 and the L2. According to Kellerman’s model, these knowledge stores interact in interesting ways depending on a learner’s own perception of the similarity or distance between any particular function or form in the two languages. Psychotypology is thus basically defined as learners’ perceptions of the relative proximity between languages. As a learner’s psychotypology is generated in mind, it does not reflect objective linguistic similarity but the learner’s own perception of the relationship between the L1 and the L2. Learners’ perceptions of L1-L2 similarity relations are therefore not fixed but continuously being revised as more information about the L2 is obtained and L2 proficiency increases (Kellerman, 1979: 40).

On the basis of a study of French learners of Polish at the absolute beginning of the foreign language learning process, Rast (2008) further clarified Kellerman’s definition of psychotypology. According to Rast (2008), it is prior linguistic knowledge and metalinguistic strategies that make up a learner’s psychotypology. A learner’s ability to formulate hypotheses about the L2 and to test and reformulate these hypotheses is a cognitive activity that ultimately depends on and follows from his or her psychotypology. Psychotypology is thus
by definition subjective, as no two learners share exactly the same prior linguistic knowledge. The subjective nature of a learner's psychotypology implies that L1 influence is ultimately a subjective phenomenon (R. Ellis, 2008: 400). The subjective nature of L1 influence was also recognized by Odlin (2003), who stated that "Much of what is called crosslinguistic influence depends on the individual judgments of language learners that there exists certain crosslinguistic similarities" (pg. 443). Remarkably, even Lado (1957: 72) acknowledged the fact that "not all the speakers of a language will have exactly the same amount of difficulty with each problem".

As a cognitive phenomenon, L1 influence is thus highly complex as it is affected by language users' perceptions, mental associations and individual choices (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 13). In line with this, Jarvis (2000) characterizes L1 influence as underlyingly either a complex unitary phenomenon or a conglomeration of interconnected processes and constraints, whose essence lies beyond reach of the researcher. Linguistic, psycholinguistic, cognitive and developmental factors as well as factors related to cumulative experience, the learning environment and language use are believed to all have their effects on the nature and the occurrence of L1 influence. These factors do not only interact with the phenomenon of L1 influence itself but also with one another in various complex ways (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 210). Each of the factors influencing the phenomenon of L1 influence explains on its own only a (seemingly) insignificant part of the variance. In addition to their complexity and the fact that each factor accounts for a small part of the variance only, it is important to note that the factors also interact in non-additive ways (N. Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006). Thus, there are not only many contributing variables, but they also interact, sometimes even converging or overriding each other (cf. e.g. Herdina & Jessner, 2002).

As implied by the above, the complex dynamic nature of the phenomenon of L1 influence basically entails the answer to the questions why L1 influence effects cannot and need not be exactly predicted, why L1 influence effects are more likely to occur in the form of general tendencies than in the form of invariable patterns (cf. Odlin, 1989: 42) and why the explanation of L1 influence effects is more of a goal of the study of L1 influence than prediction (cf. Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 211). The general cognitive principles behind the emergence of L1 influence and intralingual influence are explained in the following sections. These principles depart from the assumption that if foreign language learners lack the linguistic resources needed, are uncertain about L2 rules or encounter...
problems with the realization of specific target language rules, they may consciously or unconsciously resort to prior linguistic knowledge in order to facilitate learning.

3.5.3 The availability and relevance of a learner's linguistic resources

Traditional Contrastive Analysis already emphasized the importance of language distance to foreign language learning. In what became known as the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, it was argued that the degree of difficulty of learning a foreign language could be straightforwardly predicted from the differences between the L1 and the L2. Nevertheless, crosslinguistic differences do not necessarily lead to difficulties in foreign language learning; and by assuming that difference equals difficulty (Odlin, 1989: 17), the CAH clearly oversimplified the role of the first language in foreign language learning since it failed to explain when L1 influence will take place (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 176). Yet, determining the degree of congruence between the L1 and the L2 is obviously not sufficient for entirely predicting L1 influence (Odlin, 1992: 176). However, as learning a closely related language does generally take less time and effort than learning a genetically and typologically different language (Martin, 2006: 51), and learners from closely related L1 backgrounds show far more instances of L1 influence than learners from genetically and typologically different L1 backgrounds (Ringbom, 1987), it is evident that language distance does not play an insignificant role either.

To gain more insight into the role of the L1 plays in foreign language learning, it is essential to take a closer look at the notion of language distance. Language distance can namely be defined in both an objective and a subjective manner. **Objective language distance or objective L1-L2 similarity** refers to the actual degree of congruence between languages and belongs thus to the domain of descriptive linguistics. An objective measure of language distance can only be established through careful and systematic comparisons of structural similarities and differences between languages (Odlin, 1989: 32). In contrast, **subjective language distance or subjective L1-L2 similarity** corresponds to the degree of congruence that learners perceive or assume to exist. In this respect, a perceived subjective similarity is a conscious or an unconscious judgment that a pattern encountered in the L2 output is similar to a corresponding L1 patterns. As for assumed subjective similarities, learners merely assume that an L2 pattern
parallels an L1 pattern without having (sufficiently) verified this. When there are many perceivable similarities between the L1 and the L2, this generally leads learners to assume that there is a strong similarity between the languages as a whole. As a consequence, they easily assume more L1-L2 similarities to exist on the basis of oversimplified equivalence hypotheses (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 179–180).

Unlike objective similarities, subjective similarities are thus learner-dependent as they relate to some of the mental processes involved in the foreign language learning process (Ringbom & Jarvis, 2009). Subjective similarities have therefore more in common with the nature of L1 influence than objective similarities do (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 178). While objective similarities are symmetrical in that they equally apply from language A to language B and vice versa, subjective similarities are largely asymmetrical, generally tending more toward one direction than toward another (Ringbom, 2007: 7). Moreover, objective similarities remain constant, while subjective similarities, like L1 influence, change as foreign language proficiency increases (Kellerman, 1979: 40). What affects the degree of difficulty of learning a foreign language does therefore not seem to be the actual linguistic congruence between the L1 and the L2, but rather how naturally learners are able to establish L1-L2 correspondences (Ringbom, 1987: 60). In other words, subjective L1-L2 similarities have a more profound and direct effect on foreign second language learning than objective similarities do (Odlin, 1989: 142). As Jarvis (1997: 228) puts it, “the source for L1 influence is always a subjective L1-L2 similarity relation”.

The use of crosslinguistic similarities is motivated by nothing else than by the learners’ endeavor to facilitate the foreign language learning process (Ringbom & Jarvis, 2009). When learning a new language, learners are constantly trying to facilitate their task (Ringbom, 1987: 33). Therefore, they make use of the prior linguistic knowledge available to them (consisting of both knowledge of the L1 and initial knowledge of the L2) by means of comparing their existing knowledge to what they are currently learning. What they perceive as useful is what they put to use (Rast, 2010). The relevance of a learner’s prior linguistic knowledge thus largely determines the opportunity to establish L1-L2 similarities. The more L1-L2 correspondences learners are able to establish, the higher the likelihood of L1 influence (Ringbom, 2007: 117). Because similarity relations can facilitate the learning of a new language the most, learners are naturally more oriented toward establishing similarities than establishing differences between their prior linguistic knowledge and what they are currently learning. This is of course not to

The emergence of positive and negative L1 influence

Subjective and objective language distance can hypothetically fully overlap, but this appears to be relatively rare (Ringbom & Jarvis, 2009). In fact, subjective similarities and objective similarities often diverge in the sense that learners’ judgments concerning the similarities between languages are either completely or partly erroneous or incomplete. Regarding the possible divergence between subjective and objective similarities, three general patterns can be observed. First, objective similarities may override subjective similarities because the learner fails to recognize actually existing similarities. On the other hand, subjective similarities may exceed objective similarities in number when the learner assumes similarities to exist that do not actually exist. In addition to these quantitative differences between subjective and objective similarities, there may also be qualitative differences. Qualitative differences particularly emerge when misunderstanding or misinterpretation of similarities across languages leads learners to establish inaccurate or incomplete crosslinguistic similarity relations (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 178).

Yet, although the objective estimation of language distance is generally misleading about the likelihood of L1 influence (Odlin, 1989: 142), this is not to say that objective language distance is irrelevant in the study of L1 influence. Rather, the existence or absence of objective crosslinguistic similarities does not only suggest whether or not there are opportunities for L1 influence to occur, but the manner in which objective and subjective similarities relate also indicates whether a possible instance of L1 influence will be positive or negative. Positive L1 influence emerges where subjective similarities are compatible with objective similarities, while negative L1 influence comes up where subjective and objective similarities conflict (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 178–179). Positive L1 influence could therefore best be described as “the application of at least partially correct perceptions or assumptions of crosslinguistic similarity” (Ringbom, 2007: 31).

A schematic representation of the emergence of positive and negative L1 influence is provided in figure 6. It should however be borne in mind that L1 influence often ends up being both negative and positive at the same time given that the objective correspondences between L1-L2 elements are rarely either completely different or exactly similar (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 182). This
statement can probably best be illustrated by an example: Because Finnish and Estonian are very closely related, L1 vocabulary knowledge can facilitate the learning of L2 vocabulary to a large extent. However, although there are many objective similarities between Finnish and Estonian vocabulary, there are also many so-called false friends. Such homophones may either have a completely different meaning in both languages (e.g. *hallitus* means ‘government’ in Finnish but ‘moult’ in Estonian) or a semantically related meaning (e.g. the Finnish word *raamattu* means ‘Bible’ but the Estonian word *raamat*, gen sg *raamatu* ‘book’).

Let us now assume that a beginning Estonian learner of Finnish believes that all phonologically similar words have the same meaning in both his L1 and L2. This oversimplified similarity hypothesis would lead to both facilitation (i.e. positive L1 influence) and lexical errors (i.e. negative L1 influence), because it only holds true for those phonologically similar words that indeed have the same meaning in Finnish and Estonian.

**Fig. 6. The emergence of positive and negative L1 influence.**

**The similarity continuum**

Given that L1-L2 correspondences are rarely either completely different or exactly the same (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2010: 182), this leads us to the conclusion that there is in fact no sharp boundary between similarity and difference.

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Accordingly, Ringbom (2007: 5) distinguishes three types of relations that are distributed along a continuum of similarity and difference: Similarity relations, contrast relations and zero relations. A schematic representation of the similarity continuum is provided in figure 7.

In the case of a similarity relation, the learner perceives or assumes an L2 item or structure to be similar to an item or structure in his or her L1. This can be either a formal or a functional similarity, or a correspondence in both form and function. Full-scale crosslinguistic similarities of both form and function are rare, except in very closely related languages. In a contrast relation, learners perceive an L2 item or pattern as in important ways differing from an equivalent L1 item or structure, although they simultaneously acknowledge that the perceived difference is based on an underlying similarity. Contrary to what its name implies, a zero relation does not refer to a complete lack of crosslinguistic similarities. Some linguistic features are, after all, universal to all languages. A zero relation rather means that, particularly at early stages of learning, L2 items or structures seem to have little or no perceptible relation to the learners’ L1 (Ringbom & Jarvis, 2009).

![Fig. 7. Schematic representation of the similarity continuum.](image)

The crosslinguistic similarity continuum represented in figure 7 indicates that the facilitating effect of the first language on the second depends on the amount of L1-L2 correspondences upon which the learner can draw. When applying the continuum to groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds, the continuum provides insight into how differences in time and effort between the learning of closely related languages and languages that are typologically and genetically very different from the L1 actually emerge. As implied by the continuum, it is the relative presence or absence of crosslinguistic similarities that accounts for differences in time and effort between learning a language that is similar to the L1 or a language that is different from the L1 (Ringbom, 2007: 8). So the more similar the L1 and the L2, the more crosslinguistic similarities can be observed.
and the more help the L1 can possibly provide. Conversely, the less similar the L1 and the L2, the less crosslinguistic similarities can be observed and the less help the L1 can possibly provide (Corder, 1983: 88).

Although clear resemblances can even be found between wholly unrelated languages or between languages of which the genetic relationships are not certain (Odlin, 1989: 32), genetic similarity and typological similarity most often converge and it is generally the case that the closer languages are related, the more crosslinguistic similarities can be found. The L1 knowledge that groups of learners from closely related L1 backgrounds have at their disposal is thus by definition much more relevant than that of learners from wholly unrelated L1 backgrounds. While prior knowledge of a similar L1 offers many opportunities for the facilitation of the foreign language process, the lack of similarities between typologically different and genetically distant languages leads to a failure to facilitate the learning process (Ringbom, 2007: 8). Importantly, a failure to facilitate is by no means the same as inhibition. With respect to unrelated languages, the lack of L1-L2 similarities does not lead to negative L1 influence but to a lack of positive L1 influence (Corder, 1983: 88).

The differences between learning a closely related and a wholly unrelated language do not so much lie in a difference in the rate of learning but in a difference in the initial level of performance (Ringbom, 1987: 139). As the differences between learning languages primarily depend on the presence or lack of crosslinguistic L1-L2 similarities upon which the learner can draw, the facilitating effect of the first language on the second varies depending on how naturally L1-L2 correspondences can be established. At the initial stages of foreign language learning, learners from related L1 backgrounds can to a large or at least to some extent draw on their L1 knowledge, while learners from unrelated and typologically different L1 backgrounds cannot. As a consequence, the latter group of learners has to put in considerable effort to even acquire the most elementary grammar rules or vocabulary (Ringbom, 2007: 9). In other words, the more similar the L1 and the L2 are, the higher the initial level of L2 performance will be. In contrast, learners from unrelated L1 backgrounds will start off from a lower starting point and will therefore generally make less progress at the initial stages of foreign language learning (Ringbom, 1987: 139).

When applying the continuum to learners at different stages of foreign language learning rather than to groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds, the continuum provides insight into how differences within learners at different stages of foreign language learning emerge. These differences
ultimately depend on the amount of L2 knowledge available to the learner. At the initial stages of foreign language learning, the learner has basically nothing else to rely on than the hypothesis that the L2 works in many or at least in certain respects in a similar way as his L1, as his actual knowledge of the L2 is still very limited (Ringbom, 1987: 63). As a result, beginning learners generally show the natural tendency to establish one-to-one relationships between the L1 and the L2, which will often lead them to make use of oversimplified equivalence hypotheses (i.e. L2 item or structure = L1 item or structure), while in fact, there are actually subtle or even less subtle differences between the L1 and the L2 (Ringbom, 2007: 5–6). When learning progresses and L2 knowledge steadily increases, learners become increasingly aware of subtle and less subtle points of differences between the L2 and their L1 (Ringbom, 2007: 91–93).

The emergence of intralingual influence

Learners’ search for similarities as outlined in the preceding also extends to intralingual similarities. As opposed to crosslinguistic (or interlinguistic) similarities, intralingual similarities are the similarity relations within the target language rather than the similarities between languages. Just as learners constantly establish L1-L2 similarities, they also establish similarity relations within the language that they are learning. Like crosslinguistic similarities, intralingual similarities can either be perceived or assumed, and the learner’s conscious or unconscious judgments about the similarities within the target language rarely fully overlap with the actual similarities that exist within a language. When a learner assumes intralingual similarities to exist that do not actually exist or that do not apply to all seemingly similar cases, this can for example result in overgeneralization.

However, each time a learner comes across the same intralingual similarity, he gets the opportunity to again verify his previously formulated similarity hypothesis and to reformulate this hypothesis if needed. The more frequently the learner perceives the same intralingual similarity to exist, the more evidence he collects that this intralingual similarity indeed exists and the more the similarity relation becomes strengthened. Each time a learner perceives that an intralingual similarity that he assumed to exist holds true in certain cases only, he collects evidence to adjust his initial hypothesis. When a learner perceives that an intralingual similarity that he assumed to exist does not actually exist, he collects evidence to reject the initial hypothesis.
The formulation of intralingual similarity hypotheses can particularly well be illustrated by some of the rules concerning partitive case-marking in Finnish. In negative sentences, objects and existential subjects always appear in partitive case. Let us assume that a beginning learner of Finnish has perceived that the object of a negative sentence always bears partitive case and that the case of the existential subject is affected by negative polarity in exactly the same way. On the basis of this, it is possible that the learner assumes that predicatives also assign partitive case in negative sentences, until he gathers more TL knowledge and comes to realize that this is not the case.

### 3.5.4 From linguistic toward attentional resources

The role of attention is emphasized in most cognitive theories of Second Language Acquisition (Schmidt, 2001) and certainly also needs to be mentioned in relation to the accessibility of a learner’s linguistic resources. One of the main assumptions of cognitive theories is that a human’s ability to attend to multiple mental processes is limited. Unless being operated automatically and independent of the limitations of attention, each mental process requires attentional capacity. The degree of attentional capacity that is momentarily allocated to a cognitive process can be referred to as cognitive effort (Kellogg, 1999: 32). Skehan (1998) captured the principle of limited attentional resources in his Limited Attentional Capacity Model. The basic assumption of this model is that an imperfectly learned L2 poses a large burden on a learner’s limited attentional capacity. Because L2 learners have not yet developed sufficient control over the different linguistic levels, they have to choose as to how to allocate their attentional capacity. If the need for attention is greater than the resources available, this may consequently lead to trade-off effects between different linguistic levels in that the one aspect of linguistic performance may be prioritized over the other (Foster & Tavakoli, 2009).

The allocation of attentional resources is related to L2 proficiency in that all skills become more automated with use. A higher level of L2 proficiency basically implies more automatization and better integration of subskills. More proficient L2 learners will thus to a lesser extent be burdened by limited attentional capacity than beginning L2 learners (De Bot, 2000).

The process of L2 writing is by definition affected by attentional capacity, since writing is a complex and cognitively demanding process that relies on an interplay between various language abilities and more general cognitive abilities.
In the course of the writing process, writers must access linguistic knowledge resources in order to translate their ideas into written language (Schoonen et al., 2003). In doing so, they are however always restricted by the limitations of their working memory, as their limited cognitive capacity restricts the cognitive processes they can handle simultaneously. Writing in a second language is much more demanding than L1 writing and the problems L2 learners face are mainly language-specific (Schoonen et al., 2009).

The difference between L2 and L1 writing resides in both the availability and the accessibility of relevant linguistic resources. With respect to the availability of linguistic resources, linguistic knowledge of the L2 is generally much more limited than linguistic knowledge of the L1. As for the accessibility of linguistic resources, L2 knowledge cannot be accessed as rapidly as L1 knowledge (Schoonen et al., 2003). In addition, the complex interplay between different linguistic levels burdens attentional capacity, since for example morphosyntactic considerations and the search for vocabulary items both affect the focus of the learner’s attention (Kellogg, 1996).

### 3.5.5 The practical use of explicit grammar instruction

Considering the accessibility of linguistic resources, the distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge cannot afford to remain out of focus, also because of its importance to foreign language teaching. Implicit learning, which is the forming of *implicit knowledge*, takes place unintentionally and by means of automatic processing. In contrast, *explicit knowledge* requires controlled processing and cannot be accessed automatically (Hulstijn, 2007). Explicit knowledge is declarative and conscious knowledge, the kind of knowledge that can in principle be verbalized, while implicit knowledge is procedural and intuitive. Explicit knowledge takes the form of inconsistently applied rules, while implicit knowledge is systematically variable and available for fluent language use. Consequently, learners are consciously aware of linguistic norms in the case of explicit knowledge, and intuitively aware of these in the case of implicit knowledge (R. Ellis, 2008: 418).

Some researchers view the distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge as a continuum in that they believe that explicit knowledge can be proceduralized through sufficient practice and exposure and, consequently, gradually be transformed into implicit knowledge. While those favouring such a *strong interface position* (e.g. DeKeyser, 2003) claim that explicit declarative
knowledge can be automatized to the point where it becomes processed unconsciously, proponents of the non-interface position (e.g. Krashen, 1982) are convinced that explicit knowledge can by no means be turned into implicit knowledge. Defending a weak interface position, R. Ellis (2008: 423) proposes that explicit knowledge is indirectly beneficial to the development of implicit knowledge in that explicit knowledge helps learners to notice certain linguistic features in the input on the basis of which they can draw comparisons to their own linguistic resources. In the light of foreign language teaching, Hulstijn (2002) adopts an alternative version of a non-interface position, stating that explicit learning contributes to the construction of implicit linguistic knowledge not because explicit knowledge evolves into implicit knowledge, but because implicit knowledge is automatically being developed while gathering explicit knowledge and performing explicit learning activities.

This section is meant to provide reasoning for the practical use of explicit grammar instruction in the foreign language classroom rather than to opt for either of the interface positions. In this respect, the question whether explicit knowledge can be transformed into implicit knowledge may remain unanswered on the condition that it can be sufficiently stated that explicit learning and practice contributes in important ways to the development and establishment of implicit knowledge. The better explanation of this matter can in my opinion be drawn from Hulstijn (2002; 2007), as he touches upon the psycholinguistic as well as upon the neurophysiologic differences between the construction of explicit and implicit knowledge. Hulstijn puts the issue of explicit grammar instruction in another light by showing that proponents of a non-interface position do not need to be skeptical about the actual and practical use of explicit learning activities. Most importantly, he also takes foreign language curriculum standards and restrictions into account.

The conventional way of teaching foreign languages in schools and universities is by means of explicit instruction and knowledge gathering. Accordingly, grammar is generally taught by means of rules couched in pedagogical grammars. Foreign languages can definitely be mastered without the aid of grammar rules, providing that students receive enough TL input to enable them to rely merely on implicit learning mechanisms. In foreign language learning contexts however, students normally neither have the opportunity nor the time to be exposed to such an amount of TL input. On the condition that explicit grammar instruction and classroom activities primarily promoting implicit learning go hand in hand, Hulstijn (2007) therefore argues that explicit grammar
teaching may under many conditions be the most efficient way of mastering a foreign language. University students may in particular be served by explicit grammar instruction, as they have throughout the course of education generally developed learning strategies of a highly efficient type (Hulstijn, 2002). Acknowledging that one way of establishing implicit knowledge is through the use and application of explicit rules, it is however indispensable that the frequency with which students encounter or attempt to use the TL pattern, feature or structure to be mastered may substantially affect the development of implicit knowledge (Hulstijn, 2007).

As for the issue of automatization, it must be emphasized that, in Hulstijn’s view, there is no such a thing as the automatization of explicitly learned grammar rules. Instead, what seems to be automatization of explicit knowledge may actually result from the construction of implicit knowledge simultaneously taking place with explicit learning (Hulstijn, 2002). This is however not to say that the execution of explicitly learned rules can for instance not be accelerated. As the execution of explicit rules can however merely be accelerated to a limited extent, Hulstijn (2007) chooses to refer to it by the term false automatization. In line with this, R. Ellis (2008: 430) distinguishes between slowly accessible and relatively rapidly accessible explicit knowledge, the latter having been practiced to such an extent that it can be accessed more or less automatically.

According to R. Ellis (2009: 13), learners particularly resort to explicit L2 knowledge when facing linguistically demanding tasks and situations. Under such circumstances, learners may use their explicit knowledge as a mediating tool and a way of achieving control over the task they need to perform. Given that both foreign language writing and the application of explicitly learned grammar rules are cognitively demanding, the speed with which explicit knowledge can be accessed and the extent to which explicit grammar rules have been practiced undoubtedly have their reflection on foreign language writing performances.

### 3.5.6 The use of prior linguistic knowledge as a facilitating strategy

Following the discussion of the practical use of explicit grammar instruction, it has been debated whether explicit contrastive instruction would facilitate the foreign language learning process. In the light of this discussion, researchers have primarily focused on the relation between learners’ metalinguistic knowledge and the use of L1-L2 similarity relations. Metalinguistic knowledge can basically be referred to as a specific kind of explicit knowledge (Hulstijn, 2002).
Metalinguistic awareness refers to the ability to think abstractly about language and, consequently, to play with it. It neatly ties in with this that people who know more than one language make more use of metalinguistic abilities than monolinguals (Jessner, 2006).

As the ability to focus attention and reflect on language features may provide insight into the structure of language, several researches argue that learners would be served by instruction on how to use contrastive similarity relations as a kind of learning strategy (e.g. Ringbom, 2007). This could basically be viewed as an attempt to regulate the use of prior linguistic knowledge in order to have a potential decreasing effect on the occurrence and persistence of negative inter- and intralingual influence, building on the assumption that learners’ increased metalinguistic awareness would provide them with more insight into L1-L2 similarity relations as well as into the linguistic characteristics of the target language. On the basis of her study on the relation between metalinguistic awareness and L1 influence effects, Jessner (1999) accordingly claims that increased metalinguistic awareness causes an increased likelihood that learners’ use of prior linguistic knowledge will result in positive L1 influence, providing that they are sufficiently aware of the linguistic resources they have at their disposal. In this respect, highlighting similarities among languages that students already know could make them aware of the prior linguistic knowledge they can draw upon, while highlighting differences helps them to become more attentive to TL features that do not have an equivalent in their L1. In other words, the conscious search for crosslinguistic similarities would help learners to formulate more adequate hypotheses about the nature and limits of L1-L2 similarity relations. Concomitantly, Ringbom (2007) argues that the more similar the target language and the L1 are perceived to be, the more foreign language instruction should emphasize L1-L2 differences instead of L1-L2 similarities.

Various studies that have directly investigated the relationship between metalinguistic awareness and L1-L2 contrastive instruction have not only suggested that metalinguistic awareness and target language performance tend to work in conjunction but also provided guidelines as to how to engage students in explicit learning activities during which they would be presented with explicit contrastive information (e.g. Lightbown & Spada, 2000; Ammar, Lightbown & Spada, 2010). First, it may be obvious that not all grammar rules need to be taught through explicit contrastive instruction. Ahead of creating conditions and opportunities that are likely to promote metalinguistic awareness, it is first and foremost necessary to detect areas of need and common difficulty. In foreign
language classrooms where the students (and perhaps also teachers) share the same L1 background, these may also very well be L1-influenced TL patterns that persist or are reinforced because of their frequent usage during classroom activities (Ammar, Lightbown & Spada, 2010).

When having identified the areas for which explicit contrastive instruction could be beneficial, it is important to note that explicit contrastive instruction does not necessarily need to take the form of teacher-fronted grammar lessons. If presenting explicit contrastive information in the form of grammar lessons, the information should preferably be presented briefly and visually, void of unnecessary linguistic terminology. Explicit contrastive information could also be provided in the form of specifically prepared materials from which learners have to observe the L1-L2 similarity relations themselves (Lightbown & Spada, 2000). Alternatively, foreign language teachers could let learners come up with TL rules and patterns themselves while deliberately guiding them toward a certain direction (Ammar, Lightbown & Spada, 2010). Irrespective of the form of explicit contrastive instruction, it is obvious that its goal is to make TL rules and patterns transparent.

Linking up with the preceding section on the general use of explicit grammar instruction, explicit contrastive instruction needs to be accompanied with classroom activities during which the target language structures, rules and patterns can be attempted to be applied. Grammar exercises during which students can practice the patterns targeted with explicit contrastive instruction could in this respect be useful as long as the sentences are not too decontextualized. Importantly, communicative activities during which the target rules and patterns can be extensively practised should definitely not be omitted for the sake of speeding up the execution of the explicit knowledge. Such communicative activities do not necessarily have to be accompanied by continuous explicit feedback. Although it has been proven that overt correction of learner has a certain effect on syntactic development (Sharwood-Smith, 2004), teachers should however always try to strike the balance between fluency and accuracy, and also more specifically pertaining to the present context, the balance between encouraging the use of prior linguistic knowledge and provoking anxiety for negative L1 influence to occur (Haastrup, 1991: 341).

What also has to be borne in mind is that explicit contrastive instruction does not necessarily lead to immediate or long-term changes in target language performance. Explicit contrastive instruction should rather be seen as guidance into the right direction by providing students with information that could help
them to reconsider erroneous or otherwise inaccurate assumptions about the target language. Moreover, the effect of explicit contrastive instruction is not only influenced by variables such as opportunities to practice and frequency of exposure but also by learner-based variables such as aptitude, motivation and the extent to which they attend to the information (Lightbown & Spada, 2000).
4 Methodological framework

4.1 Toward a unified methodological framework for identifying L1 influence and intralingual influence

In 2000, Jarvis published a highly influential paper in which he challenged the lack of methodological rigor in the study of L1 influence. According to Jarvis, studies on L1 influence had until then clearly lacked a unified, systematic and comprehensive framework of investigation, which had led to numerous conflicting claims concerning the nature of L1 influence. By establishing a rigid framework of investigation, Jarvis offered the opportunity to eliminate much of this confusion and to pave the way for future research on L1 influence. The framework proposed by Jarvis can be seen as incorporating and linking up the proposals offered by other scholars (e.g. Odlin, 1989; Selinker, 1983; 1992; Granger, 1996). As in 3.3 and 3.5, it has been advocated that learners' use of prior linguistic knowledge can result in both L1 influence and intralingual influence depending on whether they primarily resort to L1 knowledge or knowledge from within the target language, this dissertation builds on the claim that the framework proposed by Jarvis can be applied as a unifying approach for identifying both evidence of L1 influence and evidence of intralingual influence. It furthermore adopts the Integrated Contrastive Model (4.1.2) as a corpus-based approach to Jarvis' framework.

4.1.1 Jarvis' methodological framework for identifying L1 influence

The framework proposed by Jarvis in 2000 consists of three components: A description of the types of evidence that minimally have to be considered when aiming at a reliable identification of L1 influence, an operational definition exactly stating when these types of evidence can be acknowledged as representing instances of L1 influence, and a list of linguistic variables, learner variables and task variables that should be controlled for in any investigation of L1 influence.

Types of evidence for L1 influence

Jarvis (2000) claimed that, although the essence of the underlying phenomenon of L1 influence lies beyond reach of the researcher, the underlying phenomenon
produces three outward effects that can be directly investigated. These outward effects of L1 influence he termed *intragroup homogeneity*, *intergroup heterogeneity* and *cross-language congruity*. The first of these effects, *intragroup homogeneity*, is observed when learners from a shared L1 background behave in a uniform manner when using the L2. A group of Estonian learners showing similar error patterns in their use of Finnish nominal morphology (cf. Kaivapalu, 2005) would thus count as an example of *intragroup homogeneity*. Accordingly, *intergroup heterogeneity* means that learners from different L1 backgrounds diverge in their use of a common L2. An example of this effect of L1 influence would be that Swedish-speaking Finns generally perform significantly better on English Matriculation Examinations than their Finnish-speaking peers (cf. Ringbom, 1987). Evidence for the third effect of L1 influence, *cross-language congruence*, is found when clear and consistent correspondences can be observed between the L1 behaviour and the L2 behaviour of learners from a shared L1 background. Using this type of evidence, Selinker (1969) for example demonstrated a significant relation between the syntactic patterns of English and Hebrew adverbial placement produced by a group of Hebrew learners of English.

According to Jarvis (2000), the identification of any of the above discussed effects of L1 influence could in fact be a sufficient condition for determining L1 influence. However, he reminds researchers to be constantly aware of the fact that the identification of each of the effects may be extremely misleading when considered in isolation. By itself, the occurrence of *intragroup homogeneity* does for example not rule out the possibility that the observed L2 behaviour is in fact common to all L2 learners, regardless of their L1 background. Accordingly, the effect of *intergroup heterogeneity* may be obscured as it may occur that learners from different L1 backgrounds (seemingly) behave similarly only because the effects of their L1s coincide to produce the same or similar L2 behaviour. Moreover, the failure to detect *cross-language congruence* does not necessarily imply the absence of L1 influence, as there are quite often qualitative differences between L1 and L2 production. In their L2 production, learners are for instance more often inclined to use prototypical words and words with a less specific meaning.

Having witnessed that researchers would have to be extremely cautious in their attempts to identify L1 influence on the basis of a single effect of L1 influence, Jarvis (2000) therefore argues that at least two of the effects of L1 influence should be identified in order to be able to draw conclusions about the occurrence of L1 influence. Although it would naturally even be far more reliable
and convincing to identify all three effects, Jarvis acknowledges the fact that in many cases it would probably not be practically achievable to investigate them all.

In a more recent publication, Jarvis (2010) provided a revised version of the types of evidence to be verified in order to identify L1 influence. This revised version was not meant as a complete revision of the original framework but rather as a refinement to the original framework and an attempt to facilitate its use. Jarvis’ revision mainly concerns that component of the framework that has received the most attention, i.e. the component that deals with the types of evidence that are needed to determine if something can be considered an instance of L1 influence.

According to the original framework, three outward effects of L1 influence could be observed, which could also be defined as different types of evidence for L1 influence. However, Jarvis (2010) acknowledged as an important weakness of the original framework that the three types of evidence for L1 influence were essentially presented as an open list of potential effects of L1 influence rather than as classification scheme of all types of evidence for L1 influence in relation to their parameters. To set up such a classification scheme, Jarvis derived the three dichotomic parameters relevant for the identification of L1 influence from the original framework, i.e. *within* versus *between*, *group* versus *language* and *similarity* versus *difference*, and added on the basis of these parameters a fourth type of evidence for L1 influence (*intralingual contrasts*) that was not represented in the original framework but has been widely used in recent investigations on L1 influence (cf. Jarvis, 2010, for an overview). Jarvis’ classification scheme for the identification and verification of L1 influence is provided in table 19. In comparison to the original methodological framework, this classification scheme better highlights the interrelationships among all four types of evidence.

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Within</th>
<th>Between</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td>intragroup homogeneity</td>
<td>intergroup heterogeneity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>intralingual contrasts</td>
<td>cross-language congruity</td>
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The fourth type of evidence for L1 influence is referred to as *intralingual contrasts*, since it concerns differences in L2 behaviour resulting from varying L1-L2 correspondences. To find evidence of this type, the researcher can for
example divide L2 features into features that are congruent and incongruent with the L1, so that it can be explored whether learners’ performance on these two types of L2 features will differ significantly. To illustrate this type of evidence for L1 influence, Jarvis (2010) takes as an example Finnish learners’ use of the English prepositions near, under and in. His database of written story retellings collected from Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking learners of English served as the data source. Jarvis specifically selected these prepositions because of their correspondence to Finnish. Unlike Swedish, Finnish namely clearly differs from English with respect to the use of prepositions. Finnish has only few prepositions (e.g. lähellä merta ‘near the sea’) and therefore, most meanings expressed by prepositions in English are in Finnish expressed by either locative case suffixes (e.g. talo:ssa ‘in the house’) or postpositions (e.g. puun alla ‘under the tree’). Thus, as the English prepositions near, under and in all in their own way correspond to Finnish, Jarvis’ purpose was to reveal whether differences could be indicated between the Finnish learners’ use of each of these English prepositions. From the analysis, it was revealed that the English preposition near was used correctly in all cases, never being omitted or used postpositionally. In some cases, the Finnish learners were however found to omit the preposition in or to use the preposition under postpositionally. With respect to intralingual contrasts, these findings thus indicate that Finnish learners’ use of English prepositions precisely seems to depend on how the prepositions correspond to Finnish.

As also reflected in the similarity-difference continuum proposed by Ringbom (2007), L1-L2 correspondences naturally extend far beyond a congruent versus incongruent dichotomy. Therefore, evidence for L1 influence based on intralingual contrasts does also not have to be limited to binary comparisons between congruent and incongruent structures but it could also involve comparisons between L1 and L2 features along a wide and complex similarity-difference continuum. The study conducted by Kaivapalu in 2005 forms a good example of an investigation involving such comparisons. In Kaivapalu’s study on Estonian learners’ use of Finnish nominal inflection, the nouns included in the inflection tasks were namely selected on the basis of a four-step continuum of L1-L2 correspondence ranging from nouns with a similar stem and ending in the L1 and L2 to nouns with a different stem and ending in both languages. From the study, the number of correct word forms produced by the Estonian learners of Finnish was precisely found to depend on how the inflectional characteristics of the nouns corresponded to Estonian. The least correct Finnish word forms were namely produced in the noun category that had both a different stem and ending
in Finnish and Estonian and the most correct word forms were produced in the category that had a similar stem and inflectional ending in both languages.

**Additional methodological guidelines**

Additional guidelines for rigorously determining whether L1 influence is present in a particular L2 sample still have to be added. As the second component of his framework, Jarvis therefore adds an operational definition for the identification of L1 influence that is meant to serve as a clear methodological guideline in the study of L1 influence. According to this definition, in which the criteria to identify L1 influence are further stated, statistical significance is the most important criterion for determining L1 influence. If no significant correlation or probability-based relation can be shown to exist between the L2 behaviour and L1 background of a group of learners, the occurrence of L1 influence cannot be confirmed. This operational definition thus implicitly states that either the combination of *intragroup homogeneity* and *intergroup heterogeneity* minimally needs to be identified or the combination of *intragroup homogeneity* and *cross-language congruence*, since the former combination could show statistically significant differences between groups of learners and the latter could provide a statistically significant correlation between learners’ L1 and L2 behaviour.

As the third component of his framework and for the purposes of an actual unified methodological framework, Jarvis (2000) proposes a set of variables that should be controlled for in the investigation of L1 influence. The list contains linguistic variables, learner variables and task variables, and is basically a modification of the constraints on L1 influence listed by R. Ellis (2008: 396–397). According to Jarvis, the following set of variables should be controlled for in any experimental study on L1 influence:

- age
- personality
- motivation and language aptitude
- social, educational and cultural background
- language background (including all previous L1s and L2s)
- type and amount of target language exposure
- L2 proficiency
- linguistic distance between the L1 and the L2
- task type
- prototypicality and markedness of the linguistic feature
In order to control for these variables, it should be either investigated how they affect the likelihood of L1 influence or they should be held constant. Taking L2 proficiency as an example, participants in a study on L1 influence should thus either be equally distributed over the different levels of proficiency (in order to explore the interaction between L1 influence and L2 proficiency) or they should all be at the same level of L2 proficiency.

4.1.2 The Integrated Contrastive Model

The current study was conducted within the framework of the Integrated Contrastive Model. This model, which is a corpus-based approach to Jarvis’ (2000) framework, involves Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) as well as aspects of traditional Contrastive Analysis (CA). The linguistic approach of Contrastive Analysis (CA) is based on the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), which was based on an assumption proposed by Lado in 1957. On the basis of the strong version of the CAH, it was claimed that all L2 errors could be predicted by identifying the differences between a learner’s native language and the target language. The analyses concerning the strong version of the CAH were therefore based on surface descriptions of the two languages involved. This procedure involved four stages: description, selection, comparison and prediction. More specifically, after the formal description of the two languages involved (description), certain items were chosen for detailed comparison (selection). With respect to the chosen items, areas of difference and similarity were identified (comparison) and on the basis of those differences and similarities, it was determined which areas were likely to cause errors (prediction) (Ellis, 2008: 359).

However, as it became evident that neither all errors made by learners could be considered a consequence of transfer nor all areas predicted by the strong version of the CAH were actually difficult for learners (Ringbom, 1995: 581), a weaker version of the CAH was formulated by Wardhaugh (1970: 124). According to the weak version of the CAH, only some of the errors made by learners were considered traceable back to L1 influence. Furthermore, rather than using CA as a predicting method, a posteriori comparisons became the focus of the weak version of CA. As a consequence, the a posteriori contrastive analysis was used inherent to Error Analysis (EA) (Ellis, 2008: 360). Nevertheless, several researchers consider a posteriori contrastive analysis a kind of ‘pseudo-procedure’ which would never be an adequate way of conducting contrastive analysis (cf. James, 1980).
Although Contrastive Analysis had been dominating the field of applied linguistics throughout the 1960s, it subsequently went through a period of disfavour, since neither the strong nor the weak version of the CAH was found to be convincing until then (Ellis, 2008: 361). Over the past two decades, however, Contrastive Analysis has experienced a revival as a major approach in learner language studies, a development that can mainly be attributed to the emergence of computerized learner corpora and bilingual corpora (Granger, 1996). Moreover, several researchers had already stressed the great potential and need of a type of CA in which native language and learner language would be compared and contrasted (e.g.; Selinker, 1989: 285, Péry-Woodley, 1990: 143). Odlin (1989: 28) particularly emphasized the usefulness of the comparison of different non-native varieties in order to evaluate the occurrence of transfer. This new type of CA is usually referred to as Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA), a term introduced by Granger in 1996.

Unlike classical CA, Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis thus concentrates on two types of comparisons (as illustrated in figure 8). On the one hand, comparisons are drawn between native and non-native varieties of a language, and on the other hand, CIA involves comparisons between different non-native varieties (Granger, 2002). The former type of comparison can highlight features of non-nativeness in the production of learners (Gilquin, Papp & Diez-Bedmar, 2008) and is not only used to highlight errors but also to identify instances of overuse and underuse of respectively words, phrases and structures. Comparisons between learners with different L1s particularly enable researchers to identify and discriminate between features peculiar to learners with one and the same L1 and those features that are shared by several groups of learners (Granger, 2002). In other words, comparisons between non-native varieties of a language are drawn in order to differentiate between possible L1-related and universal features of learner language. The aim of CIA is thus to draw a clearer picture of learner language as well as the role of L1 influence for groups of learners from different language backgrounds (Granger & Petch-Tyson, 1996).
Fig. 8. Schematic representation of Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (based on Granger, 2002; NS = native speaker data; NNS = non-native speaker data).

Since research conducted particularly within the framework of the International Corpus of Learner English demonstrated the need for an integrated contrastive model in which classical CA and CIA were combined (Granger, 1996), Gilquin (2000/2001) introduced the so-called Integrated Contrastive Model. According to Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005: 25–30), the Integrated Contrastive Model provides a useful framework within which the three potential effects of L1 influence as listed by Jarvis (2000) can be investigated on the basis of learner corpus data.

The Integrated Contrastive Model basically combines Contrastive Analysis and Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis in two different ways. From CA to CIA, the approach is predictive and involves CA-based predictions about L2 production, which are checked against CIA data. From CIA to CA, the approach is explanatory and aims to explain CIA findings, e.g. errors, underuse and overuse, in the light of classical CA descriptions. The CIA findings are paralleled with contrastive findings from L1 corpora, when such corpora are available (Paquot, 2008). A schematic overview of the Integrated Contrastive Model as pertaining to this study is provided in figure 9.
Fig. 9. The Integrated Contrastive Model as adapted to the present study (based on Granger, 2006; Paquot, 2008).

As illustrated by figure 9, predictions about the L2 production of Estonian, German and Dutch learner of Finnish are based on contrastive descriptions between the Estonian, German, Dutch and Finnish language. These CA-based predictions are subsequently checked against CIA data, involving the comparisons between native Finnish corpus data and learner corpus data on the one hand and the comparisons between the Estonian, German and Dutch learner corpora on the other hand. The CIA findings will then be interpreted and explained on the basis of classical contrastive descriptions of the source languages. The integrated contrastive analysis thus involves corpus data in its CIA part and theoretical contrastive descriptions of the source languages and the target language in its CA part.

4.2 Research questions and general predictions

The purpose of this corpus study is detect and address evidence of L1 influence and intralingual influence in the written Finnish of learners from related and non-related L1 backgrounds at various levels of L2 proficiency, and to discuss these effects in terms of their theoretical implications. The method of study is integrated contrastive analysis, a method in which contrastive data and learner corpus data
are combined to gain insight into the nature of learner language. The main research questions are formulated as follows:

- Are the general patterns concerning the use, overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative extracted from the Estonian learner corpus similar or different from those extracted from the German and Dutch learner corpora, and how can potential similarities and differences be accounted for in terms of the use of prior linguistic knowledge of the L1 and the target language?
- Are the general patterns of use, overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative extracted from the learner corpora affected by L2 proficiency, and if so, how can this relationship be characterized and accounted for?

In order to provide the contrastive data on the basis of which to formulate general predictions, chapter 2 discussed the Finnish case alternations as well as the differences between Finnish and Estonian in this respect, addressing the following questions:

- What are the points in common and the points of difference between the Finnish object, subject and predicative case alternations?
- What are the essential similarities and differences between object, existential subject and predicative case-marking in Finnish and Estonian?

A schematic overview of the objective similarities and differences pertaining to both of these questions is provided in figure 10. Figure 10 illustrates that there are, in both Finnish and Estonian, three conditions on the basis of which partitive objects are assigned. As partitive objects are assigned in cases of negative polarity, quantitative unboundedness and aspectual unboundedness, the object case alternation is in both languages essentially similar. Figure 10 also indicates that there is a one-to-one correspondence between Finnish and Estonian when it comes to the first two conditions governing the object case alternation but not when it comes to its third condition. Although the Finnish and Estonian aspectual object case alternations are also essentially similar, certain verbs have a different aspectual reading in Finnish than in Estonian. As a consequence, there is a contrast relation between the Finnish and Estonian aspectual object case alternation in that the general principles are the same but there is no one-to-one correspondence between the languages.
Fig. 10. Schematic overview of the similarities and differences between the case-marking of objects, existential subjects and predicatives in Finnish and Estonian.

Apart from the fact that aspectual boundedness does not affect the case of the existential subject, the same conditions pertaining to objects also pertain to existential subjects. Once again, the Finnish and Estonian subject case alternations are essentially similar. The difference between the languages resides in that there is one existential sentence type in Finnish but two in Estonian (cf. figure 11). In the case of an affirmative existential sentence in which the plural e-subject denotes an unbounded set of entities, the only possible morphosyntactic structure in Finnish is a third person singular predicate followed by a plural partitive e-subject. In contrast, there is an additional morphosyntactic structure in Estonian in which a third person plural predicate is followed by a nominative plural e-subject. Yet, there is always a lack of subject-verb agreement in Finnish existential sentences, while the Estonian existential sentence type 2 does involve agreement between the e-subject and its predicate.

Concerning the case-marking of predicatives in Finnish and Estonian, figure 10 indicates a conspicuous difference between both languages in that Estonian lacks an equivalent to the Finnish predicative case alternation. Consequently, copula subjects denoting unbounded entities take partitive predicatives in Finnish, whereas the case of the distributive predicative remains nominative in Estonian, regardless of whether or not the subject denotes a bounded or unbounded entity. In addition to these L1-L2 differences concerning the case-marking of predicatives, figure 10 illustrates that the Finnish predicative case alternation is affected by the smallest number of conditions of all three case alternations.
Unlike the case alternations of the object and existential subject, the Finnish predicative case alternation is not affected by the polarity of the sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESTONIAN E-SENTENCE (TYPE 1)</th>
<th>ESTONIAN E-SENTENCE (TYPE 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laual on oll ei ole leiba raamatuid -part.sg/part.pl</td>
<td>Laual on ollid raamatud -nom.pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdvP aff/neg predicate e-subject</td>
<td>AdvP aff predicate e-subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5g partitive</td>
<td>3.PL nominative plural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINNISH E-SENTENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pöydällä on oll ei ole leipää kirjoja -part.sg/part.pl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AdvP aff/neg predicate e-subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5g partitive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 11. The morphosyntactic structure of Finnish and Estonian existential sentences.

Although L1 influence is a complex phenomenon emerging from the L1-L2 similarities established by the learner, the objective similarity relations indicated in figure 10 provide a solid basis for predicting the likelihood of L1 influence to occur in the Estonian learners' use of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives. Against the background of the L1-L2 similarities and differences outlined above (and in chapter 2 in more detail), it is in the first place expected that the Estonian learner corpus will indeed reflect influence of L1 morphosyntax. Because Jarvis and Pavlenko (2010: 178–179) claim that L1 influence turns out to be positive where subjective and objective L1-L2 similarities overlap and negative where subjective and objective L1-L2 similarities conflict (cf. figure 6), the Estonian learners' use of partitives is expected to reflect both positive and negative L1 influence. The extent to which the L1 influence turns out to be positive or negative can be predicted on the basis of the varying degree of objective L1-L2 similarity concerning the case-marking of objects, existential subjects and predicatives.

As the Finnish and Estonian object case alternations are essentially similar but there are also certain differences with respect to the case-marking of the aspectual object, this may lead to a certain amount of negative L1 influence. Because the Finnish and Estonian subject case alternations are similar but the existence of an additional existential sentence type in Estonian rules out a one-to-one correspondence, the negative L1 influence expected to be reflected in the
Estonian learner corpus probably takes the form of replacement of partitive plural subjects by nominative plural subjects. The lack of L1-L2 similarities when it comes to predicative case-marking may furthermore result in a considerable amount of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax in the sense that nominative predicatives will be used instead of partitive predicatives. Against the background of the varying degree of objective L1-L2 similarity, it is thus expected that a larger amount of negative L1 influence will be manifested in the Estonian learners' use of partitive predicatives than in their use of partitive objects and existential subjects. With respect to the relation between L2 proficiency and the extent to which negative influence of L1 morphosyntax occurs, negative L1 influence is expected to be more prevalent at the lower than at the higher levels of L2 proficiency. This would be in line with Odlin (1989: 133–134), who states that negative L1 influence seems to ultimately (but nonlinearly) decrease with increasing L2 proficiency. In addition, several studies (e.g. Dommergues and Lane, 1976; Jansen, Lalleman and Muysken, 1981 and Taylor, 1975) have provided evidence for an inverse relation between negative influence of L1 morphosyntax and L2 proficiency.

On the other side, the Estonian learner corpus is mostly expected to be characterized by a substantial amount of positive influence of L1 morphosyntax. Positive L1 influence can only be detected by comparing different groups of learners. The positive L1 influence will therefore be expected to manifest itself in the form of a relative lack of errors concerning the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in the Estonian learner corpus as compared to the German and Dutch learner corpora. Like the amount of negative L1 influence is expected to be larger for the Estonian learners' use of partitive predicatives than for their use of partitive objects and subjects, the relative lack of errors as compared to the remaining learner corpora is primarily expected to be reflected in the Estonian learners' use of partitive objects and also in their use of partitive subjects.

The German and Dutch learner corpora were however not only involved in the present study in order to be able to detect positive influence of L1 influence in the Estonian learner corpus but rather to also explore the effect of the lack of L1-L2 similarities on the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives. As outlined in chapter 2, the German and Dutch language belong to a different language family than the Finnic languages and are typologically different from Finnish in many respects. German has a fairly rich morphology compared to many other Indo-European languages but not compared to Finnish. German has a
case system consisting of four grammatical cases, while Dutch merely distinguishes between nominative and non-nominative personal pronouns. German and Dutch lack a morphological partitive case, so that aspectual contrasts and quantitative unboundedness are expressed in a different way than in Finnish. Yet, the case alternations of the object, existential subject and predicative are entirely new to beginning German and Dutch learners of Finnish as a foreign language.

On a general basis, Estonian learners of Finnish have thus significantly more relevant L1 knowledge at their disposal as German and Dutch learners of Finnish. The lack of similarities between Finnish and the typologically different and genetically non-related German and Dutch language is therefore likely to result in a lack of positive L1 influence, as L1-L2 similarities cannot be used in the same facilitating way as the Estonian learners can (cf. Ringbom, 2007: 8; Corder, 1983: 88). In an attempt to compensate for the lack of relevant L1 knowledge but to facilitate the use of the target language, the German and Dutch learners are expected to reflect over- and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative as well as simplification. As they are likely to combine their knowledge of the target language with their own understanding of the partitive case, the case alternations and the notions of aspectual and quantitative boundedness, this may both result in the overgeneralization of TL rules and in overuse of the partitive in certain cases, but in avoidance of the partitive and reliance on nominative(-like) objects, subjects and predicatives in other cases. In line with Saarinen (1984) and Rinne (1996), it may for example be expected that German and Dutch learners of Finnish are sometimes inclined to use uninflected objects instead of partitive case-marked ones.

4.3 Materials

For the purposes of this corpus study, a subset of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish (ICLFI) was selected as the learner data and a subset of the Native Finnish Corpus as the native-speaker reference corpus. In this section, both of these corpora will briefly be introduced, the research materials will be presented and the data selection and proficiency rating procedures will be discussed.
### 4.3.1 The International Corpus of Learner Finnish

The *International Corpus of Learner Finnish* (ICLFI; cf. Jantunen & Piltonen, 2009; Jantunen, 2011) is a written learner corpus that was initiated in 2007 within the framework of a research project entitled *Corpus study on language-specific and universal features in learner language*. From 2010 onward, the corpus compilation continues within the framework of the project *Corpus study on language universals* (CoLLU). Both research projects represent a joint effort between the universities of Oulu (Finland), Umeå (Sweden) and Tallinn (Estonia) and Petrozavodsk (Russia).

The ICLFI is being compiled with the help of various universities around the world offering courses in Finnish as a foreign language. The Finnish language teachers working at these universities collect their students’ homework assignments, essays and other writing assignments. The writing samples to be included in the corpus are selected from the writing collections compiled by the Finnish language teachers. Given that the writings are collected during courses that differ in content, focus and level of difficulty, the ICLFI involves different genres and text types. Although most writing samples can be characterized as (descriptive) essays, the corpus also involves letters, narratives, summaries, reviews and other argumentative texts. By means of a more general dichotomy, the ICLFI can also be divided into a fiction and a non-fiction component.

By the time the research materials were selected, the *International Corpus of Learner Finnish* contained nearly 750,000 words of learners of Finnish as a foreign language from 23 different L1 backgrounds, studying in 15 countries. The corpus was made up of 15 subcorpora, each covering one of these countries. The subcorpora containing texts from Poland, Estonia and Russia were largest in size, but as the compilation of the ICLFI is an on-going project, most of the subcorpora are continuously expanding in size so that the corpus structure is continuously changing.

An overview of the structure of the ICLFI (as of 2011) is provided in Appendix A. This overview shows a clear dichotomy between larger subcorpora (> 50,000 words) and smaller subcorpora (< 25,000 words). Although most of the L1 backgrounds are directly derivable from the names of the subcorpora, eight L1 backgrounds that are marginally represented in the corpus cannot be derived from Appendix A. The ICLFI namely also contains a limited number of texts written by L1 speakers of English, French, Japanese, Persian, two Finno-Ugric languages spoken in parts of Russia (Mari and Udmurt) and two West-Germanic languages.
respectively spoken in the Dutch province of Friesland (Frisian) and in the country of Luxembourg (Luxembourgish).

4.3.2 Selection of the learner data

In order to investigate the use of the partitive case in the written Finnish of Estonian, German and Dutch learners of Finnish as a foreign language, subsets of the Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish were selected as the research materials of the current study. The selections took place on a recurring basis until sufficient data was collected. Considering that the compilation of the ICLFI was started in 2007, it took a considerable amount of time and effort to arrive at a point at which the selected learner corpora could be sufficiently large to work with.

To be included in the learner data set to be used for the linguistic analyses, several criteria concerning the writers’ language background were to be met. Only those texts written by L1 speakers of Estonian, German and Dutch, whose parents were also L1 speakers of one of these respective languages, were included. All texts written by bilingual students or students from otherwise mixed language backgrounds were thus excluded. This selection procedure was particularly important with respect to the Estonian subcorpus of the ICLFI, since the Estonian subcorpus comprises texts written both by L1 speakers of Estonian and L1 speakers of Russian. Although in 1991 Estonian became the only official language of the independent republic of Estonia, there are namely still many people in Estonia who speak Russian as their L1. According to the last count, Estonians constitute 67.9% and Russians 5.6% of the national population. Of the population of Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia, 53.7% belongs to the Estonian and 36.5% to the Russian ethnic group (Verschik, 2005). All texts from L1 speakers of Russian were thus excluded from the data, so that the Estonian learner data to be analyzed in this study purely consists of texts that have been written by L1 speakers of Estonian.

An overview of the text selection is provided in table 20. The subset selected from the Estonian subcorpus of the ICLFI contains texts written by students of the University of Tartu during the time period 2007–2009 and texts written by students of Tallinn University in 2008 and 2009. Out of the fourteen German universities offering Finnish language courses, four are involved in the text collecting of the ICLFI. Accordingly, the German selection consists of texts written by students of the universities of Göttingen (2007), Cologne (2007–2008),
Hamburg (2007 and 2010) and Greifswald (2010). The Dutch selection comprises texts that have been written by students of the University of Groningen during the 2008–09 and 2009–10 academic years. In the Netherlands, the University of Groningen is the only university to offer a degree in Finnish language and Finno-Ugric studies.

Table 20. Selection from the subcorpora of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish (Subcorpus sizes as of 2011-01-01; after this date no new data was added).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICLFI subcorpus</th>
<th>Total number of words</th>
<th>Total number of texts</th>
<th>Selected number of words</th>
<th>Selected number of texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonian subcorpus</td>
<td>122,600</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>85,749 (69.9%)</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German subcorpus</td>
<td>83,329</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>61,934 (74.3%)</td>
<td>328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch subcorpus</td>
<td>51,700</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>48,875 (94.5%)</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.3 The relation between proficiency and language contact hours

As for all texts in the International Corpus of Learner Finnish, the selected texts had been divided into different levels of proficiency according to an indirect measure of foreign language proficiency based on the total number of language contact hours received at university-level. On the basis of this proficiency measure, all texts were classified as written at the beginner’s level, the intermediate level or the advanced level, and accordingly marked by the Finnish language teacher who had collected the writing samples. Students who had received less than 200 language contact hours were hereby considered beginning learners of Finnish, students who studied Finnish in between 200 and 400 hours as intermediate learners and students who received more than 400 hours of Finnish language instruction as advanced learners. Table 21 provides an overview of the research materials as divided into different levels of proficiency based on the number of language contact hours received at university-level. The overview illustrates that the Estonian and Dutch learner corpus are fairly similarly structured when it comes to the amount of Finnish language hours received at university-level, but that the structure of the German learner corpus considerably diverges in that most texts are written by students at the intermediate level. However, a proficiency measure based on the amount of language contact hours received at university-level cannot be acknowledged as an appropriate primary measure of L2 proficiency in the current study, as will be advocated in the remaining part of this section.
Table 21. Number of words (with its percentage of each total learner subcorpus) per proficiency level as based on the total number of language contact hours received at university-level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subcorpus of Learner Finnish</th>
<th>Proficiency level (based on language contact hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beginner's level (&lt; 200h)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian LC</td>
<td>49,732 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German LC</td>
<td>13,136 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch LC</td>
<td>26,757 (55%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A measure of foreign language proficiency based on the amount of language contact hours received at university-level is essentially an indirect measure of foreign language proficiency, as the measure is based on the assumption that the duration of foreign language instruction facilitates foreign language proficiency. Support for this assumption can for instance be found from a series of articles by Carroll (1963; 1967; 1975). In Carroll’s model for school learning proposed in 1963, the duration of instructional time is acknowledged as one the major factors contributing to learning. A broad interpretation of Carroll’s model would according to Stern (1985) be that, all other factors being equal, the longer a foreign language is learned, the higher the attained level will be. Carroll found supporting evidence for such a relationship between the duration of study and L2 proficiency from several studies. From the first study (Carroll, 1967), it was revealed that those students that had studied a foreign language the longest had reached the highest levels of proficiency. From another study (Carroll, 1975), the amount of French language instruction to which students were exposed was found to be an important factor in accounting for the proficiency levels the students attained.

Although Stern (1985) argues that, on the whole, increases in instructional time lead to higher levels of foreign language proficiency, he also strongly emphasizes that the duration of language instruction does not operate alone. Rather, instructional time merely provides an opportunity for foreign language learning to take place and at the same time, it also interacts with factors like language aptitude, previous language experience, teaching methodology as well as with the characteristics of the target language. In line with Stern (1985), several reasons can be given to explain why a proficiency measure based on the number of language contact hours cannot be acknowledged as a very reliable
proficiency measure, particularly when used in this study as well as in other studies in which comparisons are drawn between different groups of learners.

First, the classifications into texts written at the beginning, intermediate and advanced level were performed by different teachers, which might have led to individual differences in the interpretation of the classification criteria. Although it is clear which number of contact hours relates to which level of proficiency, there might have been individual variation in which courses the teachers included in their language contact hour calculations.

In addition, the proficiency measure does not take into account the role of other factors influencing foreign language proficiency. The measure does for example not take into account how extracurricular language contact activities influence foreign language proficiency nor how individual variables like language aptitude or motivation affect the students’ level of proficiency. As a result of a complex interaction between all factors influencing foreign language proficiency, it is very difficult to predict how many contact hours a particular student needs to reach a certain level of proficiency. Furthermore, as only language contact hours received at the university-level are taken into account, it may not be ruled out that certain students have already learned or studied Finnish before entering university. Supporting evidence for the above outlined speculations is for example provided by Gradman and Hanania (1991) who investigated the relation between the English proficiency test TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and several background factors of foreign language learning. From their study, it was found that TOEFL scores did not significantly or strongly correlate either with the total number of language contact hours the students had received or with several other indices of L2 exposure. Although all of these factors would be expected to promote foreign language learning, the findings of Gradman and Hanania’s study thus indicate that there is no strong, direct interaction between language exposure and foreign language proficiency.

Most importantly, an indirect proficiency measure based on the amount of language contact hours also neglects the influence of the language distance between the target language and the native languages of the students on the level of proficiency they may have reached after a certain amount of formal language instruction. For instance, Finnish and Estonian are very closely-related languages which are also typologically very similar. In contrast, German and Dutch are both genetically and typologically very different from Finnish. Taking these crosslinguistic differences into account, this leads to the logical assumption that Finnish language teachers in Estonia not only presumably teach Finnish in a
different way than their colleagues in Germany and the Netherlands but that they also teach at a different pace. While it is likely that, at least at the beginning stages of learning, teachers in Estonia can deal very quickly with particular areas of Finnish grammar only indicating minor differences between Estonian and Finnish, German and Dutch students of Finnish as a foreign language probably need a more extensive and basic introduction into the Finnish language and grammar. As a consequence, all other variables being equal, it is likely that Estonian students reach a higher level of proficiency than German and Dutch students after the same amount of Finnish language instruction. On the basis of this assumption, comparisons between Estonian students and German or Dutch students who have studied Finnish for a similar amount of time would thus by definition lead to biased results.

In summary, as this study aims to provide valuable insights into the nature of the phenomena of L1 influence and intralingual influence, it may have become evident that a measure of foreign language proficiency based on the number of language contact hours received at university-level cannot be acknowledged as an appropriate and reliable measure of foreign language. It has namely been advocated that such an indirect measure of foreign language proficiency cannot be used to reliably compare different learner corpora, as it only reflects the number of language contact hours received at university-level, neglecting all other factors affecting L2 proficiency, some of these even being at the core of the phenomenon of L1 influence.

Although the classifications based on the amount of language contact hours were kept as additional background information, a more reliable and direct measure of L2 proficiency based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was chosen to explore the interaction between L1 influence and L2 proficiency. It was not only decided to use this proficiency measure because it tackles the problems stated above but also because it allows comparisons with other studies and research projects using the common reference levels.

4.3.4 Linking up to the Common European Framework of Reference

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching and assessment (CEFR; Council of Europe, 2001) was developed by an international team of experts working under the auspices of the language policy division of the Council of Europe and has its origin in over four decades of work
(Little, 2007). The CEFR is a unified descriptive frame of reference (Heyworth, 2006), developed to assist the design of foreign language teaching programmes and curricula, and the assessment of foreign language learning outcomes. The framework is not language-specific but it describes the communicative functions that learners should be able to perform at different levels of proficiency, without specifying how those functions might be realized in different languages. The framework thus presupposes that the level of proficiency that is required to perform a particular communicative task does not differ from language to language (Little, 2007).

The scaling of language proficiency is given a prominent role in the CEFR. The so-called **Common Reference Levels** are at the core of the framework (Trim, 2001). The Common Reference Levels comprise a comprehensive definition and description of language proficiency at six different levels arranged in three bands (A1/A2: Basic language user; B1/B2: Independent language user; C1/C2: Proficient language user) (Little, 2007). Each level of proficiency is described in ‘can-do’ terms (Heyworth, 2006). The proficiency descriptors thus refer to what a learner can do rather than to what he or she gets wrong (Devitt, 2001).

In Finland, one of the institutes that has adopted the requirements of the CEFR is the institute for the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency Examination. The National Certificate of Language Proficiency (YKI: Yleiset Kielitutkimot) is a language examination system for adults issued by the University of Jyväskylä and authorized by the National Board of Education, one of the executive arms of the Finnish Ministry of Education. The National Certificate is a standardized examination comprising five parts, i.e. speaking, writing, structures and vocabulary, listening and reading comprehension. The National Certificate reflects the CEFR levels of proficiency; the overall language proficiency level and the proficiency levels for each of the parts of the examination have been linked with the proficiency scales of the CEFR (Jukkala & Huhta, 2004). Table 22 illustrates the linking between the CEFR proficiency scales and the proficiency scales used in the YKI tests.
Table 22. The linking between the CEFR levels of foreign language proficiency and the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency (YKI).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR proficiency scales</th>
<th>YKI proficiency scales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>basic language user</td>
<td>A1 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent language user</td>
<td>B1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B2 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proficient language user</td>
<td>C1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C2 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Common European Framework is nowadays widely used for assessment purposes. Using the CEFR levels also in SLA research would be an important step forward considering the fact that the notions and levels of development that have been used so far have generally not been well-defined and grounded. There are two possible ways of incorporating the Common European Framework of Reference in learner corpus research. On the one hand, researchers can collect learner data from existing language tests and examination systems aligned with the Common Levels of Reference. On the other hand, researchers can compile learner data from other sources and have these data rated according to the CEFR scales (Hulstijn, Alderson & Schoonen, 2010). The Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) is for example a corpus consisting of exam scripts written by students taking Cambridge ESOL exams. All of these exams are CEFR-aligned. The learner corpus of Norwegian (Norsk Andrespråkskorpus, ASK) is an example of a corpus that has been linked to the Common European Framework of Reference after its compilation (cf. Carlsen, 2010).

The latter way of incorporating the CEFR scales into the study of Second Language Acquisition is the one also compatible with the learner data in the current study. As for linking writing samples to the CEFR levels of proficiency, a reliable rating procedure has to be used to determine the proficiency level of each writing sample. Such a rating procedure is always subjective in that it depends on how raters understand and interpret the CEFR scales and their descriptors, and in how they put them to use. The design of the rating procedure, the training and experience of the raters as well as the selection of benchmark examples are therefore essential to ensure reliable and valid rating (Alanen, Huhta and Tarnanen, 2010).
4.3.5 CEFR-based ratings of L2 proficiency

In defining the rating procedure of the current study, an attempt was made to keep the procedure the same, or at least essentially similar, to the rating procedure used in the research project *The linguistic basis of the Common European Framework Levels: Combining Second Language Acquisition and language testing research (Cefling)*, which was initiated at the University of Jyväskylä in 2007. In the Cefling project, data of learners of Finnish and English as a second language were collected by using a set of writing tasks. The collected writing samples were used to build a corpus of learner Finnish and learner English for the analysis of linguistic features (Alanen, Huhta & Tarnanen, 2010).

Within the Cefling project, each collected writing sample was independently rated according to the CEFR scales of proficiency for writing. All writing samples were evaluated by three experienced raters working at the institute for the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency Examination. An overview of the CEFR-based rating scales used in the Cefling project is provided in Appendix B. The rating scales used to determine L2 proficiency were purely functional; they do not contain any references to linguistic norms or to the learners’ capacity to use vocabulary or linguistic structures. Moreover, the raters were strictly instructed to pay attention to communicative features only and they were trained in this type of rating (Martin, Mustonen, Reiman & Seilonen, 2010). The functional nature of the rating scales, the rater training and the number of raters were crucial to the validity of the proficiency rating.

Because the CEFR scales are not specifically developed for rating purposes, it can namely not be determined to what extent the linguistic features of the writings affect the ratings. If the raters would let the linguistic features of the writings considerably influence their ratings, this would lead to circularity in that the ratings would be determined on the same linguistic features that also discriminate between the levels. Although it is ultimately impossible to entirely rule out the possibility of such an effect to occur, the rating procedure was thus designed to minimize the effect of the linguistic features of the writing on the proficiency ratings as much as possible. If despite the communication-oriented rating scales and the additional training, linguistically-oriented raters would still let the linguistic features of the texts subconsciously influence their ratings, such an unavoidable effect was neutralized by basing the final proficiency ratings on several raters (Alanen, Huhta & Tarnanen, 2010; Martin, Mustonen, Reiman & Seilonen, 2010). To ensure that the proficiency ratings represented the learners’
actual CEFR level of proficiency as reliably as possible, only those writing samples on which the inter-rater agreement was sufficiently high were included in the data set to be used for further linguistic analyses. The following criteria were used to define sufficient inter-rater agreement: The writing samples had to be rated as belonging to the same CEFR level by two out of three raters and the remaining rating was not allowed to deviate from the others by more than one level up or down. The writing samples that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the data (Alanen, Huhta & Tarnanen, 2010).

For the purposes of the current project, an essentially similar rating procedure was used. All texts selected from the Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the ICLFI were also independently rated according to the CEFR-based rating scales provided in Appendix B. The raters were presented with non-annotated, anonymous texts from which all possible background information was removed. The raters did thus not have any linguistic annotation, general background information or information about the writers’ language background at their disposal. As for this part of the rating procedure, there were no discrepancies from the Cefling project. Furthermore, the rating procedure was also performed by raters working at the institute for the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency Examination. The raters were thus both highly experienced and trained in this kind of rating.

As compared to the Cefling project, the present research project was however considerably more limited in resources. Therefore, it was not possible to use exactly the same rating procedure. It did namely not appear to be achievable to have the research materials evaluated by the same number of raters as in the Cefling project. Although an alternative procedure would have been to have all texts rated by two raters and to have a third rater evaluating those texts on which the first two differed, the highest attainable in this project was to have all texts evaluated by two raters. To ensure that these ratings would be combined in a final rating of L2 proficiency that corresponded as reliably as possible to the actual CEFR level of the learner, a set of guidelines was used that were specifically designed to deal with ratings performed by a small even number of raters (cf. Spoelman, 2010). According to these guidelines, only those texts on which the raters had reached sufficient agreement were included in the data set to be used for the further analyses. The degree of sufficient inter-rater agreement was, however, defined in a slightly different way than in the Cefling project.

For the purposes of the current study, those texts rated by both raters as belonging to the same proficiency level were straightforwardly included in the
data. Similarly, those texts for which the ratings deviated by more than one CEF level were excluded from the data. For the texts of which the CEF ratings deviated by no more than one CEF level up or down, a specific procedure was followed in that these texts were assigned the CEF level of proficiency corresponding to the lowest of the two ratings. This procedure was essentially not a trivial but a well-motivated one. The rationale behind this limited resources-based procedure is that a one-level-difference likely indicates that features of two adjacent proficiency levels are prevalent in the writing sample in question—most likely because the text was written by a learner that was just moving from one proficiency level to the next—and either alternatively or additionally that the raters, although highly experienced, have had a slightly different interpretation of the CEF descriptors of a certain level of proficiency.

Let us elaborate on this with an example. Assume that a certain text has been written by a learner performing at the threshold of level B1. In such a case, it is likely that the one rater rates the text as belonging to level A2 and the other as belonging to level B1. Taking into consideration that the CEF proficiency levels are formulated as ‘can do’ statements, it could be claimed that the two raters have agreed on the fact that the learner has minimally met the requirements of level A2 and has thus minimally reached a proficiency level of A2. Combining this rationale with an analysis of inter-rater variability (Spoelman, 2010) that provided supporting evidence for the above-outlined procedure in that the ratings deviating by one CEF level were not only found to deviate in a very systematic way (the same rater generally being responsible for the higher rating) but that the texts for which the ratings deviated by one CEF level also indeed appeared to be written at the threshold of a certain proficiency level (mostly B1), it can be considered justified and well-grounded to assign the lower level of proficiency to those texts for which the ratings deviate by no more than one CEF proficiency level.

By applying the above-outlined method, a small proportion of the texts selected from the International Corpus of Learner Finnish was excluded from the data set to be used for the linguistic analyses conducted in this dissertation. As for the Estonian learner corpus, the ratings of 3.4% of the texts deviated by more than one CEF level. These texts (altogether 2,876 words) were thus removed from the corpus. Similarly, 2.3% of the texts of the German learner corpus (1,444 words) and 2.4% of the texts of the Dutch learner corpus (1,122 words) were excluded from the data set. An overview of the definitive research materials divided into the CEF levels of proficiency is provided in table 23. As can be derived from table 23, the levels A2, B1 and B2 are well-represented and
relatively equally distributed both across and throughout the corpora. No texts were rated as belonging to the lowest level of proficiency (A1). As relatively few texts were written by students at the upper levels of proficiency, the research findings related to these levels (particularly pertaining to the C2-level of the Estonian learner corpus but also to a certain extent to its C1-level texts) should be interpreted with some caution. Moreover, the German and Dutch learner corpora lack texts written at the two upper levels of proficiency (C1-C2). Despite these limitations, the research materials definitely represent a valuable amount of data from learners of Finnish at different levels of L2 proficiency, on the basis of which all sorts of linguistic analyses can be conducted.

Table 23. Overview of the research materials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR proficiency level</th>
<th>Subcorpus of Learner Finnish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estonian LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82,789 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>basic language user A1</td>
<td>- - - - - -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language user A2 17,291</td>
<td>21% 9,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent language user B1</td>
<td>31,964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language user B2 24,143</td>
<td>29% 20,442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proficient language user C1</td>
<td>6,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language user C2 3,069</td>
<td>4% - - - -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.6 Choosing a native-speaker reference corpus

Leech (1998: xv) describes a reference corpus or a control corpus of texts produced by native speakers of the target language as “a standard of comparison, or norm, against which to measure the characteristics of the learner corpora”. In the literature, however, there has been no agreement as to the better type of comparable data to foreign language writing. On the one hand, researchers have criticized the use of native professional writing as reference data to students’ foreign learner writing. According to Lorenz (1999), it is both unfair and descriptively inadequate to compare students’ learner writing with native professional writing, because students would surely not be assisted by the fact that their efforts to master a second or foreign language are measured against the standards of a professional writers’ model.
Notwithstanding the fact that professional writings are often revised and revised for publication, Hyland & Milton (1997: 184) claim that native professional writings provide at any means an unrealistic norm for foreign language students. Accordingly, Gilquin and Paquot (2008) argue that native student writing would be a better type of comparable data to foreign learner writing than native professional writing, that is to say if the aim of comparison is to analyze and describe learner language as fairly as possible.

On the other hand, criticism has also been directed against the use of native student writing as comparable data to second or foreign learner writing. Among others, Leech (1998: xix) has for example stated that the language produced by native-speaking students does not necessarily correspond to language that learners would want to imitate. It has namely been found that native-speaking students also make for instance different types of orthographic errors (cf. Cutting, 2000). In this respect, a reference corpus consisting of professional writings could be considered a useful corpus for comparison, since professional writing can be considered to represent the norm that teachers promote and foreign language learners try to reach (Ädel, 2006: 206–207).

Gilquin and Paquot (2008) and Granger (2002) even take this argumentation a step further in advocating that the role of professional writing is inevitable and essential as soon as the pedagogical applications of learner corpus research are concerned. Granger (2002: 13) namely argues that “if learner corpus research has some applied aim, the comparison with native data is essential since the aim of all foreign language teaching is to improve the learner’s proficiency, which in essence means bringing it close to some NS norm(s)”.

As the current study focuses on the use of the partitive case in foreign learners of Finnish, a native reference corpus representing native use of the Finnish partitive was needed. Because native Finnish corpora are not widely available and the limited duration of the Ph.D. project made it impossible to compile a native reference corpus specifically for the project at hand, there was a very limited number of alternatives to choose from. These alternatives were strongly biased, if not restricted, toward professional writing. For the purposes of this study, a native Finnish reference corpus consisting of professional writings however seems, for a variety of reasons, to be the better type of comparable data.

First and foremost, a reference corpus representing native speakers’ norms is needed because of the pedagogical focus of the study, as it aims at the identification of learners’ major stumbling blocks in the use of the partitive case in order to be able to improve educational materials. Although one could argue that
native Finnish students’ writings also represent native use of the partitive case, native-speaking students are more likely to make grammatical errors in their writings than professional writers, either because they are less aware of the grammatical nuances of the Finnish language or because they do not always pay attention. In contrast, professional writing is far more likely to represent the norm for target-like use of the partitive case that teachers of Finnish as a foreign language promote. In addition, the aim of comparing the writing of foreign learners of Finnish to professional native writing is not to identify if the learners’ use of the partitive case differs from native use of the partitive, but rather to identify in what respect the learners’ use of the partitive case diverges from native use. The comparison between a learner corpus and a native reference corpus consisting of professional writing is thus a useful tool for exploring the nature of learner language.

4.3.7 Selection of the reference data

As the native-speaker reference corpus of the current study, a subset of the Native Finnish Corpus was selected. The Native Finnish Corpus is a subcorpus of the Corpus of Translated Finnish (cf. Mauranen, 2000), which was compiled at the Department of International Communication of the University of Joensuu, within the framework of the research project Translated Finnish and Translation Universals. The corpus data were collected in 1998–2000. Although the name suggests that the Corpus of Translated Finnish only comprises translated texts, the corpus consists of a non-translated component (i.e. the Native Finnish Corpus) and a component of translated Finnish. The latter is based on the former in the sense that the texts of the Native Finnish Corpus (written by professional writers; L1 speakers of Finnish) were translated to form the component of translated Finnish. The texts were translated into several languages and the translation was performed by professional translators.

The Native Finnish Corpus consists of 3,773,000 tokens and comprises texts of five different genres, i.e. scientific texts, popular scientific texts, adult fiction, adult non-fiction and children's fiction. The corpus thus contains both scientific and literary texts. The literary texts of the Native Finnish Corpus represent nearly 60 percent of the corpus. All scientific texts as well as a random subset of the literary texts of the Native Finnish Corpus were selected to form the native-speaker reference corpus of the current study. Table 24 provides an overview of the reference corpus and its structure. In selecting the texts, it was taken into
consideration that the genre has a considerable influence on the sentence structure and the general structure of a text. It was therefore decided to select a fairly balanced subset of the Native Finnish Corpus. As compared to the original data set, the reference corpus consists of 58% scientific and 42% literary texts. A corpus slightly biased toward scientific instead of literary texts reduces the effect of dialogues on the text structure, at the same time creating more of a balance between longer and shorter sentences, and complex and less complex structures.

Table 24. The structure of the native speaker reference corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Number of words</th>
<th>Number of texts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scientific texts</td>
<td>1,116,054</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>popular scientific texts</td>
<td>483,545</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult fiction</td>
<td>400,382</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult non-fiction</td>
<td>258,879</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children’s fiction</td>
<td>505,883</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,764,743</strong></td>
<td><strong>68</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.8 Overview of the materials

The materials of this corpus study consist of carefully selected learner and reference data. Subsets of the Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish (ICLFI) were selected as the learner data of this study. The terms Estonian learner corpus, German learner corpus and Dutch learner corpus will hence be used to refer to the subsets of the corpora of Finnish as a foreign language specifically selected for the purposes of this study. The texts of the Estonian learner corpus (82,789 words) have been rated as belonging to the CEFR proficiency levels A2 to C2. Nearly 90% of these texts represent the levels A2, B1 and B2. Ranging from A2 to B2, the texts written by German learners of Finnish as a foreign language constitute a corpus of a 60,490 words. The texts of the Dutch learner corpus (47,753 words) range from A2 to C1. Of these proficiency levels, only level C1 is marginally represented. A subset of the Native Finnish Corpus was selected as a native-speaker reference corpus. The reference corpus consists of texts written by L1 speakers of Finnish and contains over 2.7 million words. A schematic overview of the research data is provided in figure 12.
Fig. 12. Schematic overview of the research materials (corpus sizes in words).

Although at first glance the learner corpora do not seem to be particularly large in size, it should be borne in mind that corpus size is perceived differently according to the type of corpus used. Corpus size is definitely a relative notion: While for example monolingual internet corpora easily exceed a hundred million words, learner corpora are far more difficult and challenging to compile. Moreover, it is more difficult to compile learner corpora of less widely spoken and taught languages (e.g. Finnish) than corpora of learner English. According to Granger (1996), a learner corpus of 200,000 words is particularly large. Accordingly, the learner corpora used as the materials of this study could thus be classified as of intermediate size. Additionally, they represent a valuable amount of data from learners of Finnish as a foreign language at different levels of L2 proficiency.

4.4 Annotation and error-tagging

Both the learner corpora and the reference corpus consisted of raw texts. The corpus data were thus not linguistically annotated or error-tagged. As raw corpora exploitation possibilities are restricted to studies of lexical items and their collocations (DeMönnink, 2000: 82), some sort of linguistic annotation was required in order to systematically analyze the use of the partitive case. Although Connexor language analysis technologies has developed a syntactic parser for Finnish (Järvinen et al., 2004), there is no programme available for the automatic morphosyntactic tagging and annotation of Finnish texts.

Therefore, it was decided to process problem-oriented morpho-syntactic corpus annotation and tagging. The term problem-oriented tagging was introduced by De Haan (1984) and is considered an important type of corpus annotation (McEnery & Wilson, 2001: 69). Problem-oriented tagging means that,
rather than using a time-consuming exhaustive general tagging system to annotate the entire contents of a corpus, only the phenomenon directly relevant to the research question of a particular study is annotated (McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006: 43). Providing specific information concerning the structure or phenomenon investigated, problem-oriented tagging can provide a much greater level of detail than any pre-existing annotations in the corpus (De Haan, 1984: 123).

Since in this case the object of study is the Finnish partitive case, the focus of the problem-oriented annotation and tagging process was on partitive forms. In order to process problem-oriented annotation and tagging, a Microsoft Word Macro was designed to identify all partitive forms in both the learner corpora and the reference corpus. All possible endings of partitive case-marked words (i.e. morphological regular and irregular endings, morphological exceptions, endings resulting from morphological contractions, incorrectly inflected forms) were incorporated in the macro’s morphosyntactic tagging schemes. As a result of the morphosyntactic tagging schemes inserted into the macro, the macro added the tag <partitive> directly after all partitive forms. After these automatic tagging processes, all partitive phrases were classified into partitive objects, partitive predicatives, partitive subjects and remaining partitives, with the help of a set of macros designed to simplify tagging and correcting. Partitive phrases were classified as remaining partitive, when they did not fit into the categories of partitive objects, predicatives and subjects. Partitive OSMA constructions (adverbials of quantity which are case-marked like objects) and partitives part of partitivus comparationis –constructions (e.g. hän on minua-Part.Sg vanhempi ‘he is older than I am’) were for instance classified as remaining partitives.

Subsequently, the learner corpora were error-tagged on the use of the partitive case with the help of a set of macros designed to speed up the error-tagging process. Although the detection of partitive forms was performed more or less automatically, the error detection process required much more attention and effort. Ahead of the actual error tagging process, all potential errors were detected by a systematic manual procedure. The doubtful cases were hence evaluated by two independent raters, both native speakers of Finnish. The one rater was a senior student in Finnish language and the other an experienced university teacher of Finnish as a foreign language. Both of them followed the same consistent procedure for the evaluation of the text samples they were provided with. As the contextualization of potential errors is a prerequisite for accurate and reliable judgments, the raters were not presented with decontextualized sentences but with
an adequate amount of linguistic context, to be expanded when needed. The actual error-tagging, which is the marking of the errors in the corpus data, was not executed until the error evaluation process had ended. A schematic overview of the annotation and error-tagging process as well as the sets of tags used to annotate the corpora, is provided in table 25. While the first two stages were performed for both the learner corpora and the reference corpus, the latter stage was carried out for the learner corpora only. Section 4.5.2 contains a detailed description of the error types corresponding to the error tags.

Table 25. Schematic overview of the annotation and error tagging process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annotation and error-tagging process</th>
<th>Set of tags</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first stage</td>
<td>identification of partitive forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second stage</td>
<td>marking of partitive phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third stage</td>
<td>error-tagging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Analysis

In this section, the analytical methods of the corpus study will be outlined. First, frequency and error analysis procedures are described. Subsequently, Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis and the Integrated Contrastive Framework will be introduced in order to illustrate the general design of the study and the comparisons that were made. Finally, the statistical methods that were used to compare the corpora will be discussed.
4.5.1 Basic frequency analysis

Since the learner corpora and the reference corpus were linguistically annotated on the basis of the problem-oriented annotation approach described in section 4.4, partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives were tagged in all corpora. The basic frequency analysis was conducted on the basis of the annotated corpora. The absolute frequencies of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives were obtained with the aid of WordSmith Tools 5.0 (Scott, 2008).

WordSmith is a corpus analysis package that offers a set of corpus exploration and analysis tools designed in order to work effectively with written corpora of any kind and in any language. The programme contains three main tools, namely WordList, KeyWords and Concord. The WordList tool can be used to create word lists of individual texts or whole corpora, ordering the words by frequency and alphabetically. The KeyWords tool draws comparisons between word lists generated for test corpora and word lists created for reference corpora. By comparing the word lists of a test corpus and a reference corpus, the key words of the test corpus can be identified. A key word is a word that is found to be used far more frequently than its corresponding frequency observed from the reference corpus would suggest. The Concord tool locates all references to a given query, showing the references in standard concordance lines with the search word or words centred and a variable amount of context at either side. With the help of Concord, it is also possible to further examine the collocations of the search word, to create dispersion plots (maps showing where in the texts the search words are found) and to generate lists of recurring clusters and phrases (Scott, 2001).

While frequencies of words and syntactic forms can usually be automatically retrieved by submitting non-annotated corpora to WordSmith Tools (Granger, 2003), the better way to obtain frequencies of partitive phrases is to submit corpora annotated on their use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives, because Finnish partitive forms have a myriad of different endings (as a result of morphological contraction, among other factors) and because not the frequency of each partitive form but merely the frequency of each partitive phrase (object, subject or predicative) has to be retrieved. Instead of entering each possible partitive ending as a search word in WordSmith’s Concord tool, the Concord tool was used for concordancing on tags, i.e. the tags introduced in section 4.4 were...
entered as the search words of Concord. Figure 13 provides an excerpt of a concordance analysis on the tag <partitive_subject>.

Fig. 13. Concordancing on tags: Excerpt of a partitive subject concordance analysis.

4.5.2 Basic error analysis

Since the learner corpora were linguistically annotated on the basis of a problem-oriented annotation approach (cf. section 4.4), only partitive objects, partitive predicatives and partitive subjects were tagged and marked in the texts. From a methodological point of view it would therefore be far more straightforward and less time-consuming to only analyze those deviant uses of the partitive case, in which the partitive has been incorrectly used as the case of the object, predicative or subject, at the same time leaving out of consideration those errors in which another case has been used instead of the partitive.

However, as Schot-Saikku (1990) correctly points out, a case is best described in relation to the other cases of the declinational system of a language. Carrying this reasoning a step further, it can be stated that cases should also be analyzed in relation to each other. Particularly with respect to the partitive case this reasoning makes perfect sense, as the partitive case cannot accurately be described without taking into account the case alternations of the object, predicative and subject (as discussed in chapter 7). Analyzing merely deviant uses of the partitive case in which the partitive has been incorrectly used as the case of
the object, predicative or subject would thus certainly lead up to insight into one side of the spectrum only.

Moreover, a small pilot study (Spoelman, 2009) indicated that possibly even the most important side of the spectrum would be neglected if analyzing merely partitive overuse errors. From this pilot study involving longitudinal data of a Dutch learner of Finnish (8,855 tokens), it was namely revealed that the number of partitive underuse errors was remarkably larger than the number of partitive overuse errors. Of all errors concerning the case-assignment of partitive objects, 68.4% turned out to be partitive underuse errors and 31.6% partitive overuse errors. With respect to the use of partitive predicatives, 70.6% of the errors appeared to be partitive underuse errors and 29.4% partitive overuse errors. The use of partitive subjects was characterized by error percentages of 63.6% and 36.4% for respectively partitive underuse and overuse errors. Overall, 68.6% of the errors were partitive underuse errors, while the remaining 31.4% were partitive overuse errors. The partitive underuse errors correlated with the case alternations of respectively the object, predicative and subject in the sense that most underuse errors of partitive objects reflected the use of the nominative, accusative or genitive-accusative case instead of the partitive case, while most underuse errors concerning partitive subjects and predicatives were found to be errors in which the nominative was used instead of the partitive. In the current study, both partitive overuse errors and partitive underuse errors were therefore analyzed in order to obtain a complete and detailed picture of the use of the partitive case in Finnish learner language.

For each sentence element, two types of errors were therefore distinguished: Partitive overuse errors and partitive underuse errors. Errors were classified as partitive overuse errors, if the partitive case was used to replace another case. Partitive underuse errors represent errors in which another case was used to replace the partitive case. Once again, it is important to note that no single instance was classified as an error without taking its context of use and linguistic context into account. It is with this in mind that errors can, in the light of this learner corpus study, be defined as 'misuse in context'.

Table 26 provides an overview or the error classification scheme. The learner corpora were error-tagged on these partitive over- and underuse errors with the help of a set of macros designed to simplify error-tagging. Subsequently error frequencies were obtained from the learner corpora with the help of WordSmith Tools 5.0. The absolute error frequencies were obtained in the same way as the general frequencies of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives were extracted
from the corpora, namely by concordancing on tags – in this case thus by concordancing on the error tags.

Table 26. Error classification scheme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>partitive overuse error</td>
<td>the partitive was incorrectly used as the case of the object (another case was required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>the partitive was incorrectly used as the case of the object (another case was required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predicative</td>
<td>the partitive was incorrectly used as the case of the predicative (another case was required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>the partitive was incorrectly used as the case of the subject (another case was required)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| partitive underuse error | the partitive was required as the case of the object, but another case was used instead |
| object                  | the partitive was required as the case of the object, but another case was used instead |
| predicative             | the partitive was required as the case of the predicative, but another case was used instead |
| subject                 | the partitive was required as the case of the subject, but another case was used instead |

4.5.3 Combined frequency-error analyses

By relating the actual occurrence of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives to the partitive over- and underuse errors, a couple of additional frequency measures were calculated. The calculation of these frequency measures basically bridges the gap between the basic frequency analysis and the basic error analysis. The first to be calculated was the number of correctly used partitives, obtained by subtracting the partitive overuse errors from the total number of partitive case-marked objects, subjects or predicatives. The number of partitive-requiring contexts (PRCs) could subsequently be calculated by adding the number of partitive underuse errors to the number of correctly used partitive objects, subjects or predicatives.

Overall, the analyses built upon five frequency measures, related in the sense that subtracting the partitive overuse errors (1) from the partitive case-marked objects, subjects and predicatives (2) results in the correctly used partitive objects, subjects and predicatives (3), while adding the partitive underuse errors (4) to the
correctly used partitive object, subjects and predicatives results in the partitive-requiring contexts (5). To account for the differences in size of the respective learner corpora and the native reference corpus, the absolute frequencies of all of these five frequency measures were generally turned into relative frequencies, error percentages or otherwise proportional frequencies. However, it should be mentioned that the statistical tests described below automatically compare proportionally between corpora.

4.5.4 Statistical methods

The most commonly used statistical test in corpus linguistics is probably the chi-square test (abbreviated as $\chi^2$), also called the Pearson chi-square test. The chi-square test assumes that the data are normally distributed. As the corpora used in this study are not very large in size, it is likely that the data are not normally distributed. Therefore, it was decided to use another commonly used test in corpus linguistics, namely the log-likelihood test, to draw comparisons between the learner corpora and the native-speaker reference corpus used as the materials of this study.

The log-likelihood test is also called the log-likelihood G-square or the log-likelihood chi-square test. In contrast to the traditional chi-square test, the log-likelihood test does not assume that data are normally distributed. However, since the log-likelihood test has a distribution similar to that of the chi-square test, the probability values (or $p$-values) of the log-likelihood test can be found in a statistical table for the distribution of chi-square.

The log-likelihood test basically compares the difference between the observed values and the expected values. The observed values are the actual frequencies extracted from the corpora, while the expected values correspond to the frequencies that one would expect if no factor other than chance were influencing the frequencies. The closer to each other the observed and expected values are, the more likely it is that the difference between them is due to chance. Conversely, the greater the difference between the observed and expected values, the less likely it is that the difference has arisen by chance (McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006). Substantial differences between the observed and expected counts of a word or linguistic feature thus suggest either over-representation or under-representation of the word or feature in question in one of the corpora involved in the statistical comparison (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998).
To calculate the log-likelihood test statistics, a frequency table has to be generated. In order to compare the frequencies of words or other linguistic features observed from two corpora, generally 2 × 2 frequency tables are used. For such tables, the value for the degrees of freedom (d.f.), as calculated by the formula \((r-1) \times (c-1)\) (\(r = \text{number of rows}; c = \text{number of columns}\)), is equal to 1 (Rayson, 2003). An example of 2 × 2 frequency table generally used in corpus linguistics is provided in table 27.

**Table 27. Model of a frequency table for statistical testing with the log-likelihood test.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>corpus 1</th>
<th>corpus 2</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of linguistic item</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>b</td>
<td>a+b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency of other items</td>
<td>c-a</td>
<td>d-b</td>
<td>c+d-a-b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>c</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>c+d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to table 27, the values ‘a’ and ‘b’ correspond to the raw frequencies observed from the corpora. Therefore, the values ‘a’ and ‘b’ are jointly called the observed values (O-values). The values ‘c’ and ‘d’ correspond to the total number of words respectively corpus 1 and corpus 2 consist of. N-values is the joint term covering the values ‘c’ and ‘d’, since these values correspond to the corpus sizes (Number of words).

On the basis of the O- and N-values, the expected values (E-values) and the log-likelihood value (LL) can be calculated. The expected values for corpus 1 (E1) and corpus 2 (E2) are calculated based on the formula listed in (1). The log-likelihood value (LL) can subsequently be calculated according to the formula in (2). Since the formulas take the corpus sizes into account, there is no need for normalization of the raw frequencies (Rayson & Garside, 2000).

1. \(E_1 = \frac{c(a+b)}{c+d}; E_2 = \frac{d(a+b)}{c+d}\).
2. \(LL = 2*((a*\log (a/E_1)) + (b*\log (b/E_2)))\)

The higher the calculated LL value, the larger the difference between the two frequency scores is. An LL of 3.84 or higher is for instance significant at \(p < 0.05\) and an LL of 6.63 or higher is significant at the level of \(p < 0.01\). Table 28
provides an overview of the critical values of the Log Likelihood test together with their level of significance. As illustrated by table 28, the probability level ($p$-level) can be derived by comparing the calculated log-likelihood value with the critical values.

Table 28. Statistical testing on the basis of the log-likelihood test: Critical values, levels of significance and probability levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical value</th>
<th>Level of significance</th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>5% level</td>
<td>$&lt; 0.05$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>1% level</td>
<td>$&lt; 0.01$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>0.1% level</td>
<td>$&lt; 0.001$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.13</td>
<td>0.01% level</td>
<td>$&lt; 0.0001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An online log-likelihood calculator\(^3\) developed by Paul Rayson of Lancaster University was used to perform the statistical analyses of the current learner corpus study. With the help of this statistical tool, comparisons were drawn between the frequencies of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives observed from the different learner corpora and those observed from the reference corpus.

\(^3\) The online log-likelihood calculator can be accessed via the url [http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html](http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html)
5 The use of the partitive case in Finnish learner language: Results of the corpus study

This chapter reports on the main findings of the corpus study. Building on the frequency analysis that serves as the general starting point of the analyses, the chapter proceeds to subsequently discuss the learners’ use of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives. Each of these three sections starts with a combined frequency-error analysis on the basis of which more detailed error analyses are conducted, and concludes with an interpretation and elaboration of the findings in the light of contrastive analysis data.

5.1 The relative occurrence of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives

Figure 14 provides an overview of the relative occurrence of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives in the learner corpora (LCs) and in the native Finnish reference corpus (RC). The figure reflects the actual occurrence of partitive case-marked objects, subjects and predicatives, irrespective of whether or not these were used correctly. Relative frequencies were calculated by relating the absolute frequencies of occurrence to the corpus sizes. As shown in figure 14, partitive objects occurred in all corpora substantially more frequently than partitive subjects and predicatives. In this respect, the general pattern exhibited by the native reference corpus was shared by all learner corpora. As opposed to the reference corpus, partitive objects occurred more frequently in the Estonian learner corpus and less frequently in the German and Dutch learner corpora. In addition, the Dutch learner corpus contained fewer, and the German and Estonian learner corpora more partitive subjects than the reference corpus. As for partitive predicatives, these were more common in the Dutch and German learner corpora than in the reference corpus but substantially less frequent in the Estonian learner corpus. To determine potential significant differences, Log-likelihood statistical testing was employed.
Fig. 14. The occurrence of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in the learner corpora (LCs) and in the native Finnish reference corpus (RC).

Statistical testing revealed various significant differences between the learner corpora and the reference corpus. As for the occurrence of partitive objects, these appeared to be significantly more frequent in the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 101.18; p = .0001$), and significantly less frequent in both the German learner corpus and the Dutch learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 56.37; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 18.35; p = .0001$, respectively). In addition, partitive subjects were found to occur significantly more frequently in both the German learner corpus and the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 55.94; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 15.20; p = .0001$), while there were no significant differences between the Dutch learner corpus and the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 3.81$). Furthermore, the Dutch learner corpus was found to contain significantly more partitive predicatives ($G^2 (1) = 26.10; p = .0001$), and the Estonian learner corpus significantly fewer partitive predicatives than the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 123.36; p = .0001$), while partitive predicatives were in the German learner corpus used to a similar extent as in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 4.53$).
5.2 Estonian, German and Dutch learners’ use of partitive objects

5.2.1 The use, overuse and underuse of partitive objects

Figure 15 presents an overview of the use of partitive objects in the learner corpora and the native Finnish reference corpus. The category *partitive objects* reflects the occurrence of partitive case-marked objects in the corpora, regardless of whether or not correctly used. The category *partitive-requiring contexts* refers to the contexts requiring a partitive object, leaving open whether or not a partitive object was indeed realized. The relative error frequencies are not only overtly represented in the data table of figure 15, but also covertly present in the deviations between the partitive case-marked and correctly used partitive objects (*overuse errors* or incorrectly used partitive objects) and between the partitive-requiring contexts and correctly used partitive objects (*underuse errors* or not-realized PRCs).

As illustrated in figure 15, partitive objects occur more frequently in the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus, and less frequently in the other learner corpora. Partitive-requiring contexts are also shown to be more common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus, but in the remaining learner corpora they seemingly occur to a similar extent as in the native reference corpus. The error frequencies are shown to be the highest in the German learner corpus and the lowest in the Estonian learner corpus. Unlike the Estonian learner corpus, the Dutch and German learner corpora contain relatively more under- than overuse errors. Bridging the gap between frequency and error analysis, statistical comparisons between the learner corpora and the reference corpus were employed for both partitive case-marked objects and partitive object-requiring contexts.
As for the actual occurrence of partitive objects, statistical testing indeed indicated highly significant differences between the frequencies of occurrence observed from the learner corpora and the frequencies observed from the reference corpus. Compared to the reference corpus, partitive objects appeared to be significantly more frequently used in the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 101.18; p = .0001$), and significantly less frequently used in both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 56.37; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 18.35; p = .0001$). With regard to the partitive-requiring contexts occurring in the learner corpora and the reference corpus, significant differences were merely revealed between the Estonian learner corpus and the reference corpus. While PRCs were significantly more common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 95.64; p = .0001$), there were namely neither significant differences between the German learner corpus and the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 0.32$) nor significant differences between the Dutch learner corpus and the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 0.33$).

Having focused on the overall learner corpora, the use of partitive objects at different levels of L2 proficiency is illustrated in figure 16. As can be inferred from this figure, partitive objects were particularly common in the C1 component of the Estonian learner corpus. Nonetheless, statistical testing showed that
partitive objects and partitive-requiring contexts did not only occur significantly more frequently in the C1 component of the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 143.26; p = .0001$) but also significantly more frequently in its B1 and B2 components than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 101.18; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 101.18; p = .0001$, respectively). Significantly fewer partitive case-marked objects than the reference corpus were observed from the A2 and B1 components of the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 28.98; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 38.89; p = .0001$) as well as from the B2 component of the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 15.71; p = .0001$).

Within the Estonian learner corpus, partitive objects were significantly more frequently used at B1 than at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 31.25; p = .0001$) and at C1 than at B2 ($G^2 (1) = 60.25; p = .0001$), but significantly less frequently at C2 than at C1 ($G^2 (1) = 23.18; p = .0001$). Similarly, PRCs occurred significantly more frequently at B1 than at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 15.95; p = .0001$) and at C1 than at B2 ($G^2 (1) = 56.93; p = .0001$), but significantly less frequently at C2 than at C1 ($G^2 (1) = 22.38; p = .0001$). In addition, partitive case-marked objects were found to occur significantly more frequently in the B2 than in the B1 component of the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 6.79; p = .01$), but the occurrence of PRCs did not significantly change when proceeding from one proficiency component to the other. With respect to the Dutch learner corpus, significant differences between successive proficiency components were neither found for partitive case-marked objects nor for partitive object-requiring contexts.

Considering the relative error frequencies, figure 16 shows that all proficiency components of the German and the Dutch learner corpus contain relatively more underuse errors than overuse errors. In contrast, the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus is the only component of this corpus that contains more under- than overuse errors; in the other proficiency components overuse errors are relatively more frequent than underuse errors. When proceeding from the lower to the higher levels of L2 proficiency, the relative error frequencies generally decrease when underuse errors are concerned, while concerning overuse errors a clear decrease can merely be observed from the Dutch learner corpus. With respect to partitive over- and underuse errors, statistical comparisons will however not be drawn on the basis of these relative frequencies but on the basis of error rates taking the varying number of partitive objects and PRCs into account.
Summarizing, the finding that partitive objects occurred significantly less frequently in both the German and Dutch learner corpus than in the native reference corpus indicates a significant underrepresentation of partitive objects in the respective learner corpora. As it was also revealed that both learner corpora contained relatively more partitive underuse errors than overuse errors as well as similar amounts of partitive-required contexts as the reference corpus, this suggests that the significant underrepresentation of partitive objects can be attributed to the underuse of the partitive as the case of the object rather than to avoidance of partitive object-requiring contexts. In contrast, both partitive case-marked object and partitive object-requiring contexts were found to occur significantly more frequently in the Estonian learner corpus than in the native reference corpus, indicating a significant overrepresentation of partitive objects in the Estonian learner corpus. Although the use of partitive objects in the German and the Dutch learner corpus thus seems to be remarkably similar, a clearly different pattern was observed from the Estonian learner corpus. More elaborative analyses on the patterns of partitive object over- and underuse are however needed to confirm and support these findings.
**5.2.2 The over- vs. underuse of the partitive as the case of the object**

In order to reliably compare the partitive object errors occurring in the different learner corpora, partitive object overuse and underuse error rates were calculated by relating the number of partitive object overuse errors to the total number of partitive case-marked objects (*partitive object overuse error ratio*) and the partitive object underuse errors to the partitive object-requiring contexts (*partitive object underuse error ratio*). The partitive object overuse error rate thus basically reflects the percentage of incorrectly used partitive objects and the partitive object underuse error rate the percentage of PRCs in which the partitive was not realized as the case of the object. Figure 17 provides the partitive object error ratios both calculated for each separate level of proficiency and for the learner corpora as a whole. Error rates based on the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus were added to facilitate the comparison with the other learner corpora and to be able to verify whether potential significant differences are not merely due to the fact that the upper proficiency levels are represented in the Estonian but not in the remaining learner corpora.

![Graph](image.png)

**Fig. 17.** Error ratios reflecting the overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object.
As shown in figure 17, approximately 5% (167/3209) of the partitive objects occurring in the Estonian learner corpus were used incorrectly, versus 11% (213/1988) in the German learner corpus and 7% (124/1669) in the Dutch learner corpus. In 5% (164/3206) of the PRCs occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, 25% (598/2373) of those occurring in the German learner corpus and 15% (282/1827) of those occurring in the Dutch learner corpus, the partitive was not realized as the case of the object but another case was used instead. As can also been inferred from figure 17, the Estonian learner corpus is at all proficiency levels characterized by low partitive object overuse and underuse error rates. Furthermore, particularly the underuse error rates observed from the Estonian learner corpus are substantially lower than those observed from the remaining learner corpora. Unlike the Estonian learner corpus, both the German and Dutch learner corpora generally show higher underuse than overuse error rates as well as decreasing error rates when proceeding from one proficiency level to the other.

With respect to the occurrence of partitive object overuse errors, statistical testing revealed that the Estonian learner corpus showed a significantly lower partitive object overuse error rate than both the German learner corpus (G^2 (1) = 57.51; \( p = .0001 \)) and the Dutch learner corpus (G^2 (1) 11.25; \( p = .001 \)), and the Dutch learner corpus a significantly lower overuse error rate than the German learner corpus (G^2 (1) = 10.79; \( p = .01 \)). As can be inferred from the test statistics, the differences between the Estonian and the German learner corpus were nevertheless the largest. When merely involving the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, the only noteworthy difference resides in that the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus then differ at a lower level of significance, namely \( p = .01 \). Regarding the overuse error rates calculated for each separate level of L2 proficiency, the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus were merely found to significantly differ at A2 (G^2 (1) = 15.56; \( p = .0001 \)), and the German and the Dutch learner corpus merely at B2 (G^2 (1) = 18.18; \( p = .0001 \)). Significant differences between the Estonian and the German learner corpus were found at all proficiency levels (A2: G^2 (1) = 16.55; \( p = .0001 \); B1: G^2 (1) = 10.86; \( p = .001 \) and B2: G^2 (1) = 28.11; \( p = .0001 \)). For none of the learner corpora were significant differences found between the overuse error rates calculated for the successive proficiency components (e.g. A2 vs. B1; B1 vs. B2).

Considering partitive object underuse errors, the Estonian learner corpus also showed a significantly lower error rate than both the German learner corpus (G^2 (1) = 487.20; \( p = .0001 \)) and the Dutch learner corpus (G^2 (1) = 164.24; \( p = .0001 \)). Restricting the comparisons to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner
corpus did not lead to differences concerning these significance levels. Furthermore, the Dutch learner corpus was also found to exhibit a significantly lower underuse error rate than the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 48.42; p = .0001$). Considering the separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus showed at all proficiency levels significantly lower error rates than the German and the Dutch learner corpora (A2: $G^2 (1) = 92.15; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 24.90; p = .0001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 259.29; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 37.98; p = .0001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 71.92; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 65.68; p = .0001$), and the Dutch learner corpus significantly lower error rates than the German learner corpus at the levels A2 and B1 ($G^2 (1) = 22.48; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 53.74; p = .0001$, respectively). As for the differences between the successive proficiency components, each learner corpus showed a significantly higher underuse error rate at A2 than at B1 (Estonian LC: $G^2 (1) = 22.84; p = .0001$; German LC: $G^2 (1) = 11.94; p = .001$; Dutch LC: $G^2 (1) = 16.53; p = .0001$), and the Estonian and German learner corpora also showed significantly higher underuse error rates at B1 than at B2 ($G^2 (1) = 7.22; p = .01$ and $G^2 (1) = 52.79; p = .0001$, respectively).

Statistical testing within the learner corpora revealed that both the German and the Dutch learner corpus were characterized by a significantly higher under- than overuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 128.53; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 49.68; p = .0001$, respectively). With the B2 component of the German learner corpus as the one exception, significant differences were also found within all proficiency components of the German learner corpus (A2: $G^2 (1) = 40.54; p = .0001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 98.85; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus (A2: $G^2 (1) = 26.29; p = .0001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 9.87; p = .01$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 27.41; p = .0001$). The Estonian learner corpus did not exhibit significantly differing over- and underuse error rates ($G^2 (1) = 0.72$).

Summarizing, the error rates indicating overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object were found to be significantly lower in the Estonian learner corpus than in the German and Dutch learner corpora, and also significantly lower in the Dutch learner corpus than in the German learner corpus. Although there were no significant differences between successive proficiency components as far as partitive overuse error rates were concerned, partitive underuse error rates did not only appear to be significantly higher in the A2 than in the B1 component of each learner corpus but also significantly higher in the B1 than in the B2 component of the Estonian and German learner corpora. Furthermore, the underuse error rates were not only in the overall German and Dutch learner corpora but also in each of its proficiency components (except for
the German B2 level) found to be significantly higher than the overuse error rates, whereas significant differences between over- and underuse error rates were not observed from the Estonian learner corpus.

5.2.3 Partitive object overuse error patterns

The partitive object overuse errors were classified into errors in which partitive singular and in which partitive plural was erroneously used as the case of the object. As shown in table 29, the vast majority of the overuse errors were errors in which partitive singular was incorrectly used as the case of the object. As shown in table 29, the German and Dutch learner corpora show an exactly similar distribution of the error categories, while the Estonian learner corpus is characterized by a slightly different pattern.

Table 29. Partitive object overuse error classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner Corpus</th>
<th>Estonian LC</th>
<th>German LC</th>
<th>Dutch LC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Overuse of part sg</strong></td>
<td>87% (163/187)</td>
<td>72% (152/212)</td>
<td>72% (88/122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hän löysi <em>työpaikkaa.</em></td>
<td>s/he(Nom) find-Past.3Sg job-Part.Sg</td>
<td><em>She/he found a job.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Overuse of part pl</td>
<td>13% (24/187)</td>
<td>28% (60/212)</td>
<td>28% (34/122)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostin <em>kaikkia kirjoja.</em></td>
<td>buy-Past.1Sg all-Part.Pl book-Part.Pl</td>
<td><em>I bought all of the books.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When relating the overuse errors respectively to the total number of partitive singular and partitive plural objects rather than to the total number of overuse errors, it was revealed that approximately 6% (163/2919) of the partitive singular objects in the Estonian learner corpus, 11% (165/1448) of the partitive singular objects in the German learner corpus and 8% (88/1157) of the partitive singular objects in the Dutch learner corpus were used incorrectly. In addition, 3% (24/867) of the partitive plural objects contained in the Estonian learner corpus, 10% (52/545) of the partitive plural objects in the German learner corpus and 7%
(34/512) of the partitive plural objects in the Dutch learner corpus were shown to be used incorrectly. These overall error rates were complemented by error rates calculated for each separate proficiency level and provided in figure 18, which shows fairly similar patterns concerning the overuse of partitive singular and the overuse of partitive plural as the case of the object. Whereas statistical testing indicated significantly higher partitive singular than partitive plural overuse error rates when comparing within the Estonian learner corpus as a whole ($G^2 (1) = 12.21; p = .001$), comparisons within the separate proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus did not reveal any significant differences. Furthermore, there were neither significant differences between the partitive singular and plural overuse error rates extracted from the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 1.28$) nor between the corresponding error rates extracted from the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 0.46$).

![Fig. 18. The overuse of partitive singular and partitive plural as the case of the object.](image)

Approaching the partitive object overuse errors from a different perspective, it was revealed that not all overuse errors were linked to the object case alternation: 87% (162/187) of the overuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus, 84% (179/212) of the overuse errors contained in the German learner corpus and 80% of the overuse errors (98/122) occurring in the Dutch learner corpus) were replacements of restrictive objects by partitive objects, while the remaining 13–20% were overuse errors in which partitive objects were used instead of a locative verb complement or postpositional phrase.
5.2.4 Partitive object underuse error patterns

On the whole, the vast majority of partitive object underuse errors were made in affirmative contexts (Estonian LC: 94% (163/174); German LC: 87% (522/599); Dutch LC: 84% (236/280)). The remaining underuse errors (6–16% of the total number of partitive object underuse errors) were made in negated sentence contexts. Figure 19 provides error rates for which the partitive underuse errors in negated contexts were related to the number of negated PRCs and the partitive underuse errors in affirmative contexts to the number of affirmative PRCs.

Figure 19 illustrates that in 5% (11/246) of the negated PRCs occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, the partitive was not realized as the case of the object versus 24% (86/363) of the corresponding PRCs occurring in the German learner corpus and 9% (46/524) of the negated PRCs contained in the Dutch learner corpus. The partitive was furthermore not realized as the case of the object in 5% (163/3551) of the affirmative PRCs occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, 26% (522/2021) of the affirmative PRCs represented in the German learner corpus and 13% (236/1305) of the affirmative PRCs occurring in the Dutch learner corpus. As also shown in the figure, the Estonian learner corpus is characterized by relatively low underuse error rates at all proficiency levels as well as by a slight decrease when proceeding from the lower to the higher levels of proficiency. While the error rates observed from the German learner corpus are generally higher than those observed from the Dutch learner corpus, both learner corpora are characterized by substantially lower underuse error rates at B1 than at A2. Except for the underuse error rate in affirmative contexts extracted from the German learner corpus, none of the error rates decreases when proceeding from B1 to B2. While the Dutch learner corpus clearly shows higher underuse error rates in affirmative than in negative contexts, the remaining learner corpora do not particularly show such a pattern.

Statistical testing revealed that the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora exhibited significantly lower partitive object underuse error rates than the German learner corpus in negated contexts ($G^2 (1) = 39.07; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 29.92; p = .0001$, respectively) as well as in affirmative contexts ($G^2 (1) = 428.56; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 21.50; p = .0001$, respectively). Moreover, the Estonian learner corpus showed a significantly lower underuse error rate than the Dutch learner corpus in affirmative ($G^2 (1) = 170.62; p = .0001$) but not in negated contexts ($G^2 (1) = 4.59$). Comparing the different proficiency components of the Estonian and the German learner corpus, significant differences with respect to
the underuse error rates in negated contexts were found at the levels B1 and B2 (G^2 (1) = 7.35; \(p = .01\)) and G^2 (1) = 13.15; \(p = .001\), respectively) and significant differences with respect to the underuse error rates in affirmative contexts at all proficiency levels (A2: G^2 (1) = 90.09; \(p = .0001\); B1: G^2 (1) = 29.52; \(p = .0001\); B2: G^2 (1) = 53.80; \(p = .0001\)). Significant differences between the underuse error rates in affirmative contexts extracted from the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora were also determined at all proficiency levels (A2: G^2 (1) = 27.21; \(p = .0001\); B1: G^2 (1) = 49.97; \(p = .0001\)) and B2: G^2 (1) = 73.80; \(p = .0001\)). Comparisons between the proficiency components of the German and the Dutch learner corpora revealed significant differences at all proficiency levels (A2: G^2 (1) = 11.12; \(p = .001\); B1: G^2 (1) = 16.75; \(p = .0001\); B2: G^2 (1) = 9.95; \(p = .01\)) and at the levels A2 and B1 as far as affirmative contexts were concerned (G^2 (1) = 15.92; \(p = .001\) and G^2 (1) = 29.55; \(p = .0001\), respectively).

Although the Estonian learner corpus did not show significant differences between successive proficiency components with respect to the underuse of the partitive as the case of the object in negated contexts, the German and Dutch learner corpus exhibited significantly lower underuse error rates at B1 than at A2 (G^2 (1) = 7.82; \(p = .01\) and G^2 (1) = 7.05; \(p = .01\)). As for affirmative contexts, all learner corpora showed significantly lower underuse error rates at the B1 than at the A2 level (Estonian LC: G^2 (1) = 24.48; \(p = .0001\); German LC: G^2 (1) = 9.64; \(p = .01\); Dutch LC: G^2 (1) = 8.80; \(p = .01\)) and the German learner corpus also at the B2 than at the B1 level (G^2 (1) = 60.15; \(p = .0001\)). While neither the Estonian learner corpus nor the German learner corpus showed significant differences between the underuse error rates in negated and affirmative contexts (G^2 (1) = 0.01 and G^2 (1) = 0.81), the Dutch learner corpus exhibited a significantly lower underuse error rate in negated than in affirmative contexts (G^2 (1) = 23.46; \(p = .0001\)), a difference that was also found to be significant within the B1 and B2 components of the Dutch learner corpus (G^2 (1) = 10.36; \(p = .01\) and G^2 (1) = 12.41; \(p = .001\)).
Apart from the classification of partitive object underuse errors into errors made in affirmative and errors made in negated sentence contexts, partitive object underuse errors were classified into five error categories on the basis of the case endings that were used to replace the partitive case. Of this error classification, which is provided in table 30, the categories 2–3 directly relate to the object case alternation in that one of the case endings of the restrictive object was used instead of the partitive case. Taken together, 35% (62/174) of the partitive object underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus are thus directly linked to the object case alternation versus 45% (268/599) of the underuse errors extracted from the German learner corpus and 60% (168/280) of the underuse errors contained in the Dutch learner corpus.

Considering each error category separately, approximately half of all partitive object underuse errors contained in the Estonian and German learner corpora appear to be errors in which nominative singular was used instead of partitive singular. While underuse errors of this type (category 1) were proportionally less common in the Dutch learner corpus than in the remaining learner corpora, category 3 errors were less common in the Estonian learner corpus. In addition, category 4 errors were completely absent from the Estonian learner corpus, whereas 3% of the partitive object underuse errors observed from both the German and the Dutch learner corpus were errors in which partitive plural was replaced by genitive plural. The category of remaining underuse errors was proportionally slightly more frequent in the Estonian learner corpus than in the other learner corpora.
Taking into account that the remaining partitive object underuse errors mainly involved underuse of partitive singular as the case of object, on an overall basis, 82% (142/174) of the partitive object underuse errors extracted from the Estonian learner corpus, 67% (403/599) of those observed from the German learner corpus and 66% (186/280) of those contained in the Dutch learner corpus were substitutions of partitive singular. Thus, the underuse of partitive singular accounted for a larger percentage of the total number of partitive object underuse errors than the underuse of partitive plural.

Table 30. Partitive object underuse error classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partitive object underuse error category</th>
<th>Learner Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estonian LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 nom sg instead of part sg</td>
<td>51% (88/174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 gen-acc sg instead of part sg</td>
<td>18% (32/174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 nom pl instead of part pl</td>
<td>17% (30/174)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 gen pl instead of part pl</td>
<td>0% (20/599)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 remaining</td>
<td>13% (23/174)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relating the errors reflecting underuse of partitive singular to the number of contexts requiring a partitive singular object (rather than to the total number of partitive object underuse errors) and the errors reflecting underuse of partitive plural to the number of contexts requiring a partitive plural object, figure 20 shows that all learner corpora are however characterized by similar underuse error patterns for partitive singular (SG) and partitive plural (PL). While the Estonian learner corpus is at all proficiency levels characterized by low partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates, the remaining learner corpora do not only exhibit relatively high overall error rates but also higher error rates at the lower than at the higher levels of proficiency. The German learner corpus shows a substantial decrease of both error rates with increasing L2 proficiency, and the
Dutch learner corpus a clearly decreasing partitive plural underuse error rate (when proceeding from the A2 to the B1 level). Its partitive singular underuse error rate however remains fairly stable across proficiency levels.

Drawing statistical comparisons between the learner corpora, it was revealed that the Estonian learner corpus exhibited significantly lower partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates than both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 316.01; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 87.42; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 99.92; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 54.52; p = .0001$). Merely comparing to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus did not lead to differences in the levels of significance. Although no significant differences were found between the partitive plural underuse error rates extracted from the German and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 1.14$), the Dutch learner corpus showed a significantly lower partitive singular underuse error rate than the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 31.21; p = .0001$). Considering the separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus showed at all proficiency levels significantly lower partitive singular underuse error rates than the German and Dutch learner corpora (A2: $G^2 (1) = 94.62; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 9.92; p = .01$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 176.48; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 29.44; p = .0001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 34.38; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 48.11; p = .0001$) as well as significantly lower partitive plural underuse error rates (A2: $G^2 (1) = 23.92; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 11.27; p = .001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 63.25; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 11.50; p = .001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 54.52; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 14.55; p = .001$). Comparing the German and the Dutch learner corpora, the partitive singular underuse error rates turned out to significantly differ at the levels A2 ($G^2 (1) = 39.43; p = .0001$) and B1 ($G^2 (1) = 29.35; p = .0001$).

Looking at the patterns found at different proficiency levels within the corpora, the Estonian learner corpus was found to be characterized by significantly lower partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates at B1 than at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 15.63; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 8.42; p = .01$), the German learner corpus by significantly lower partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates at B1 than at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 20.42; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 16.17; p = .0001$), and at B2 than at B1 ($G^2 (1) = 54.70; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 35.55; p = .0001$), and the Dutch learner corpus merely by a significantly lower partitive plural underuse error rate at B1 than at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 21.42; p = .0001$). In addition, the German learner corpus was found to exhibit a significantly lower partitive plural than partitive singular underuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 8.42; p = .01$),
while significant differences between the error rates did not exist for the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 1.07$ and $\chi^2 (1) = 0.55$).

However, figure 20 not only shows the partitive singular and plural underuse error rates but it also represents how the error rates were built up. As can be inferred, the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular largely parallels the partitive singular underuse error rate and the use of nominative plural instead of partitive plural the partitive plural underuse error rate. The decreasing shape of both error rates can therefore be attributed to the fact that partitive singular became less frequently replaced by nominative singular and partitive plural less frequently by nominative plural when proceeding from the lower to the higher levels of proficiency. The Estonian learner corpus is hereby characterized by lower error rates than the remaining learner corpora, the German learner corpus in particular.
Fig. 20. Underuse of partitive singular (SG) and partitive plural (PL) as the case of the object.
Underuse of partitive singular as the case of the object

Statistical testing showed that partitive singular was significantly less frequently replaced by nominative singular in the Estonian learner corpus as a whole than in both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 237.18; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 22.21; p = .0001$). Merely involving the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus led to similar levels of significance. With respect to the separate proficiency components, it was revealed that the Estonian learner corpus differed at all proficiency levels significantly from the German learner corpus (A2: $G^2 (1) = 73.42; p = .0001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 139.15; p = .0001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 21.90; p = .0001$) and at the B2 level significantly from the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 22.77; p = .0001$). Moreover, partitive singular was significantly less frequently replaced by nominative singular in the Dutch learner corpus than in the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 67.12.18; p = .0001$), a significant difference that was also found when comparing the A2 components and the B1 components of the respective learner corpora ($G^2 (1) = 50.67; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 62.26; p = .0001$, respectively).

Also with respect to substitutions of partitive singular by (genitive-)accusative singular, these occurred significantly less frequently in the Estonian learner corpus than in both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 81.64; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 82.09; p = .0001$). Narrowing down to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus did not lead to changes in these levels of significance. Concerning the separate proficiency components, it was shown that the Estonian learner corpus differed at all proficiency levels significantly from the German and Dutch learner corpus (A2: $G^2 (1) = 24.43; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 18.78; p = .0001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 7.17; p = .01$ and $G^2 (1) = 34.02; p = .0001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 58.32; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 20.00; p = .0001$). In contrast, there were no significant differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus with respect to the use of (genitive-)accusative singular instead of partitive singular ($G^2 (1) = 0.39$).

Regarding the patterns observed from different proficiency levels within the corpora, it was revealed that partitive singular was significantly less frequently replaced by nominative singular in the B1 than in the A2 components of the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 20.85; p = .0001$), the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 21.56; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 25.23; p = .0001$), and also significantly less frequently in the B2 component of the German learner corpus than in its B1 component ($G^2 (1) = 26.98; p = .0001$). In addition,
(genitive-)accusative singular was significantly less frequently used instead of
partitive singular in the B2 than in the B1 component of the German learner
corpus ($G^2 (1) = 6.72; \ p = .01$); further significant differences between successive
proficiency components were not found. In both the Estonian and German learner
corpora, partitive singular was shown to be significantly less frequently replaced
by (genitive-) accusative singular than by nominative singular ($G^2 (1) = 27.18; \ p
= .0001 \text{ and } G^2 (1) = 90.85; \ p = .0001$). Concerning the separate proficiency
levels, significant differences were found at the A2 level for the Estonian learner
corpus ($G^2 (1) = 29.91; \ p = .0001$) and at the A2 and B1 level for the German
learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 42.37; \ p = .0001 \text{ and } G^2 (1) = 51.53; \ p = .0001$).
Substitutions of partitive singular by nominative singular and (genitive-)
accusative singular occurred to a similar extent in the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2
(1) = 0.01$).

Underuse of partitive plural as the case of the object

Statistical testing showed that partitive plural was in the Estonian learner corpus
significantly less frequently replaced by nominative plural than in both the
German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 66.86; \ p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus
($G^2 (1) = 48.31; \ p = .0001$). Similar levels of significance were obtained when
merely involving the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus. Considering the
separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus differed at all
proficiency levels significantly from the German and the Dutch learner corpora
(A2: $G^2 (1) = 21.56; \ p = .0001 \text{ and } G^2 (1) = 9.09; \ p = .01$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 50.44; \ p
= .0001 \text{ and } G^2 (1) = 10.46; \ p = .01$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 11.56; \ p = .001 \text{ and } G^2 (1
= 13.56; \ p = .001$). However, significant differences between the German and Dutch
learner corpora were not found to exist ($G^2 (1) = 0.57$).

As for the successive proficiency components of each learner corpus,
partitive plural was found to be significantly less frequently replaced by
nominative plural in the B1 than in the A2 components of the Estonian learner
corpus ($G^2 (1) = 8.42; \ p = .01$), the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 18.30; \ p
= .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 18.56; \ p = .0001$), as well as in the
B2 than in the B1 component of the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 26.98; \ p
= .0001$).
5.2.5 Interpretation and elaboration of the error analyses

Overuse of the partitive as the case of the object

As for all learner corpora, similar proportions of the partitive object overuse errors were classified as overuse errors related and not related to the object case alternation. Nevertheless, more detailed analyses revealed that not all of these overuse errors were motivated by the same underlying source.

In all learner corpora, the elativ complement of the rection verb *pitää* ('to like') was most frequently replaced by a partitive object. The verb *pitää* was in the Estonian learner corpus 8 times, in the German learner corpus 14 times and in the Dutch learner corpus 18 times used in co-occurrence with a partitive object. As the semantically similar (and frequently occurring) verb *rakastaa* ('to love') does indeed take a partitive object, the verb *pitää* was probably therefore frequently used in co-occurrence with a partitive object. The use of *pitää* with a partitive object rather than with an elative complement could therefore be interpreted as an instance of intralingual influence resulting from the overgeneralization of the valency pattern of a semantically similar verb (cf. (63)). When relating the number of incorrect uses of *pitää* to the number of times the verb was correctly joined with an elative complement, it however became evident that the incorrect use of *pitää* particularly came to light because of the high-frequent use of *pitää* in general. The verb was namely shown to be used correctly in 96% of its occurrences (270/278) in the Estonian learner corpus, in 90% of its occurrences (66/80) in the German learner corpus and in 86% of its occurrences (107/125) in the Dutch learner corpus.

(63)

Error example  

\[ \text{\textit{Pidän} *koiria enemmän kuin *kissoja.} \]
like-1Sg dog-Part.Pl more than cat-Part.Pl

Target-like 1  

\[ \text{\textit{Pidän koirista enemmän kuin kissoista.}} \]
like-1Sg dog-Elat.Pl more than cat-Elat.Pl

'I like dogs more than cats.'
As for the incorrectly used partitive objects contained in the Estonian learner corpus, careful inspection not only revealed that the partitive overuse errors occurred to a fairly similar extent at all proficiency levels but also that in 62% (115/187) of the incorrectly used partitive objects, the co-occurring verbs had partitive object-requiring equivalents in Estonian. The vast majority of these errors, i.e. 78% (90/115) were found to relate to differences between the Finnish and Estonian aspectual object case alternation in that they are used in conjunction with verbs that are (quasi-)resultative in Finnish but irresultative in Estonian. In error example (64), the quasi-resultative verb muistaa ('to remember') was for instance used with a partitive rather than with a restrictive object, probably because the Estonian irresultative equivalent mäletada also takes a partitive object. Similarly, the resultative verb aloittaa in (65) was used with a partitive object, in accordance with its Estonian irresultative equivalent alada.

(64) B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example  Muistan hyvin *yhtä luentoa.
remembe.1Sg well-Adv one-Part.Sg lecture-Part.Sg

Target-like  Muistan hyvin yhden luennon siitä aiheesta.
remembe.1Sg well-Adv one-GenAcc.Sg lecture-GenAcc.Sg

Estonian equiv. Mäletan hästi üht loengut sellest teemast.
remembe.1Sg well-Adv one-Part.Sg lecture-Part.Sg

'I remember well one lecture about that topic.'
As for the remaining 22% (25/115) of the partitive object overuse errors that seemed to have been influenced by Estonian morphosyntax, these appeared to involve verbs that take a partitive object in Estonian but in Finnish either a locative complement (e.g. Estonian midagi mõjutada versus Finnish (illative) vaikuttaa johonki 'to affect something') or a postpositional NP (kedagi külestada versus Finnish vieraila jonkun luona 'to visit somebody'). In (66) it is also illustrated that although the verb construction nauttia elämää (‘to enjoy life’) involves an elative complement in Finnish, a partitive object was used in a parallel manner to its Estonian equivalent.

(66) B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example He aloittivat suomen kielen *oppimista.

they(Nom) start-Past.3Pl Finnish-Gen.Sg learning-Part.Sg

Target-like He aloittivat suomen kielen oppimisen.

they(Nom) start-Past.3Pl Finnish-Gen.Sg learning-GenAcc.Sg

Estonian equiv. Nad alustasid soome keele õppimist.

they(Nom) start-Past.3Pl Finnish-Gen.Sg learning-Part.Sg

'They started to learn Finnish (Lit.: ‘the learning of Finnish').'

As for the remaining 22% (25/115) of the partitive object overuse errors that seemed to have been influenced by Estonian morphosyntax, these appeared to involve verbs that take a partitive object in Estonian but in Finnish either a locative complement (e.g. Estonian midagi mõjutada versus Finnish (illative) vaikuttaa johonki 'to affect something') or a postpositional NP (kedagi külestada versus Finnish vieraila jonkun luona 'to visit somebody'). In (66) it is also illustrated that although the verb construction nauttia elämää (‘to enjoy life’) involves an elative complement in Finnish, a partitive object was used in a parallel manner to its Estonian equivalent.

(66) B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example Hän voi nauttia *uutta elämää.

s/he(Nom) can-3Sg enjoy-1Inf new-Part.Sg life-Part.Sg

Target-like Hän voi nauttia uudesta elämästä.

s/he(Nom) can-3Sg enjoy-1Inf new-Elat.Sg life-Elat.Sg

Estonian equiv. Ta võib nautida uut elu.

s/he(Nom) can-3Sg enjoy-1Inf new-Part.Sg life-Part.Sg

‘She/he can enjoy a new life.’
Although a large proportion of the partitive object overuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus could thus reflect negative influence of L1 morphosyntax, a substantial 38% of the partitive overuse errors did not fall within this category. As the verbs used in co-occurrence with these remaining overuse errors generally turned out to have similar aspectual readings in both Finnish and Estonian, the errors clearly were not caused by L1-L2 differences concerning the case-marking of the aspectual object. As for the German and Dutch learner corpora as well, these partitive object overuse errors may likely be due to the complexity of Finnish object case-marking in general.

Underuse of the partitive as the case of the object

Polarity

As outlined in 2.4.1, there is a one-to-one correspondence between Finnish and Estonian object case-marking in that the object bears partitive case in negated sentences. In contrast, there are certain differences with respect to the Finnish and Estonian aspectual object case alternations and the case marking of personal pronoun objects. As a consequence, Finnish and Estonian do not fully overlap with respect to the case marking of the object in affirmative sentences. On the basis of these L1-L2 similarity relations, it could be expected that Estonian learners would particularly at the lower proficiency levels produce fewer errors in negated than in affirmative sentences. In a similar vein, it could be expected that German and Dutch learners would also have an easier time with negated than with affirmative sentence contexts because the principles for object case-marking are straightforward in the former but in the latter sentence contexts.

Notwithstanding the above, it was however revealed that all learner corpora showed fairly similar partitive object underuse error patterns in both negated and affirmative sentence contexts and that merely the Dutch learner corpus was characterized by significantly lower partitive object underuse error rates in negated than in affirmative sentence contexts. Considering negated sentence contexts, the German and the Dutch learner corpus furthermore showed significantly lower underuse error rates at the B1 than at the A2 level, but not at the B2 than at the B1 level. Considering each proficiency component of the Dutch learner corpus separately, significantly lower underuse error rates in negated than in affirmative sentences were observed at the levels B1 and B2. Altogether, these
findings suggest that the Dutch learners indeed experienced fewer difficulties with partitive object case-marking in negated than in affirmative contexts, a difference that could probably not yet be observed at the initial proficiency level, because the learners had then just started to familiarize themselves with the whole new issue of partitive object case-marking.

The finding that the Dutch learners of Finnish produced fewer partitive object underuse errors in negated than in affirmative sentence contexts can be interpreted as positive intralingual influence. Similar positive influence between the case-marking of partitive objects in negated and affirmative sentences could however not be observed from the Estonian and the German learner corpus. There could be several possible explanations for this.

Importantly, the existence of an objective intralingual contrast between the case-marking of partitive objects in negated and affirmative sentences does not necessarily imply that positive intralingual influence will occur or can be detected. The L1-L2 similarity concerning the partitive of negation had possibly not attracted the Estonian learners' attention and the rule opacity concerning the partitive of negation had probably remained unnoticed to the German learners. Because object case-marking is affected by many factors, possible intralingual influence might moreover have been obscured by other variables that could not sufficiently be excluded.

In addition, negated PRCs were particularly in the Estonian and the German learner corpora substantially less frequently represented than affirmative PRCs, which might have biased the error rates. Error rates are namely likely to be proportionally higher when they are based on relatively small rather than on large numbers of contexts, because larger numbers of contexts do not only provide more opportunities to do wrong but also to do right. Yet, the Estonian learner corpus is in both negated and affirmative contexts characterized by partitive object underuse error rates that might even be too low for differences to occur (they namely seem to reflect a ceiling effect). As for the German learners in particular, it might also be due to limited attentional resources that a difference between the underuse error rates in negated and affirmative was not found to exist. The German learners probably focused so much on the aspectual boundedness of the sentence and the quantitative boundedness of the object that the negative polarity of the sentence simply remained unnoticed to them. Thus, they probably indeed became increasingly aware of the straightforward rules for object case-marking in negated sentences, but they were nevertheless unable to
substantially benefit herefrom because they were not capable of taking all factors affecting object case-marking simultaneously into account.

**On the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular**

In all learner corpora, nominative singular was often incorrectly used as the case of the object. In the Dutch learner corpus, these category 1 errors covered 28% of all partitive object underuse errors, in the German learner corpus 47% and in the Estonian learner corpus 51% of all partitive object underuse errors. Although category 1 errors were observed from all learner corpora, not all errors of this type may have the same underlying cause. First, it should be taken into account that nominative singular corresponds to both the basic dictionary form of a noun as well as to one of the case endings of the restrictive object (zero ending; Ø).

In Finnish, the singular object of an active verb alternates between partitive and (genitive-) accusative singular. The use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular in active sentence contexts thus suggests that the object has simply been left uninflected. Unlike active sentence contexts, the singular object of a passive verb alternates between partitive singular, nominative singular and accusative singular. Nominative and accusative singular hereby represent the case endings of the restrictive object. The use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular in passive sentence contexts can thus either mean that the incorrect object case has been chosen or that the basic dictionary form has been left uninflected.

When considering active versus passive voice, it was revealed that out of the category 1 errors observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora one fourth was made in passive sentence contexts. In contrast, merely 6% of the category 1 errors occurring in the Estonian learner corpus were made in passive sentence contexts. The category 1 errors made in negated contexts seem to be particularly due to an overgeneralization of the principles for object case-marking in passive sentence contexts. Rather than completely avoiding the question of object case-marking or object inflection, it seems that partitive singular generally has been replaced by nominative singular because it has incorrectly been assumed that the (aspectual) object case alternation only applies in active and not in passive sentence contexts. The finding that partitive singular was almost exclusively replaced by nominative singular in cases of high-frequent irresultative verbs (e.g. *puhua* 'to speak' (67)) and irresultative verbs with a complex valency pattern (e.g. *pitää jotakuta jonakin* 'to consider somebody something’ (68)) provides...
supporting evidence for this assumption. In active sentence contexts, the object case-marking of high-frequent verbs and complex verb constructions do namely not form much of a problem: Learners generally use irresultative verbs in co-occurrence with a partitive object and the mere fact that they use complex verb constructions such as (68) implies that they are at least to a certain extent familiar with the valency patterns of the constructions. Nominative singular thus often seems to have been considered the default object case in passive sentence contexts. This overgeneralization of the principles for object case-marking in passive sentence contexts can be interpreted as intralingual influence. Importantly, the finding that only a small proportion of the category 1 error observed from the Estonian learner corpus was made in passive sentence contexts suggest that this intralingual influence is less evident in the Estonian learner corpus than in the remaining learner corpora. This can be very well motivated on the basis of L1-L2 similarity relations: The principles for object case-marking in passive sentence contexts are essentially similar in Finnish and Estonian, which provides Estonian learners of Finnish with the opportunity to draw upon L1 knowledge and L1-L2 similarities.

(67) B1 component of the German learner corpus

*Error example*  
Pian puhutaan vain *englanti.  
soon speak-Pass only English(Nom.Sg)

*Target-like*  
Pian puhutaan vain englantia.  
soon speak-Pass only English-Part.Sg

'Soon only English will be spoken.'

(68) B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus

*Error example*  
*Sibelius pidetään hyvänä säveltäjänä.*  
Sibelius(Nom.Sg) consider-Pass good-Ess.Sg composer.Ess.Sg

*Target-like*  
Sibeliussta pidetään hyvänä säveltäjänä.  
Sibelius-Part.Sg consider-Pass good-Ess.Sg composer.Ess.Sg

'Sibelius is considered a good composer.'
With respect to the category 1 errors observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora, three out of four were made in active sentence contexts. In the Estonian learner corpus, 94% of these errors were made in active sentence contexts. Unlike passive predicatives, active predicates cannot take nominative singular objects. As nominative singular is also the basic dictionary form of a noun, the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular in active sentence contexts thus suggests that the object has been left uninflected, probably for the sake of restrictive simplification. Such a tendency to simplify could either be a conscious or an unconscious facilitation strategy: The learner may either deliberately have chosen to avoid object case-marking or (s)he may simply have forgotten to inflect the object, probably because morphosyntactic, morphological and semantic issues could not all be addressed simultaneously.

The latter of these possible explanations could be linked with the Limited Attentional Capacity Model, proposed by Skehan (1998) and outlined in 3.5.4. In accordance with this model, attentional resources are by definition limited and therefore, they have to be distributed over the different linguistic subsystems as well as over the different aspects of language. Attending to one aspect of performance or grammar or one linguistic subsystem may therefore mean that others are neglected, simply because not everything can be attended to simultaneously (Foster & Tavakoli, 2009). The limited attentional resources principle particularly plays a role at the earliest stages of learning, when knowledge of the L2 is still limited and cannot yet be accessed rapidly or effortlessly (De Bot, 2000). The principle of limited linguistic and attentional resources is nicely exemplified in (69), in which of two objects linked with a conjunction the second has been left uninflected. This is probably because the learner first had to look up the noun *kielitiede* ('linguistics') in the dictionary and subsequently forgot that it also had to be inflected.

(69) *A2 component of the German learner corpus*

**Error example** Minä opiskelen suomea ja *kielitiede.*

I(Nom) study-1Sg Finnish-Part.Sg and linguistics(Nom.Sg)

**Target-like** Minä opiskelen suomea ja kielitiedettä.

I(Nom) study-1Sg Finnish-Part.Sg and linguistics-Part.Sg

'I study Finnish and linguistics.'
As for the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular objects in the German and Dutch learner corpora, it is likely that these partitive object underuse errors indeed reflect a tendency to use basic uninflected object for the sake of restrictive simplification. The same tendency was also evidenced in a small-scale study on the use of objects by German learners of Finnish (Saarinen, 1984) as well as in a case-study on a German learner of Finnish as a second language (Rinne, 1996). In both of these studies, the German learners of Finnish often appeared to use uninflected object forms instead of both partitive objects and restrictive objects. Unlike the small-scale studies conducted by Saarinen (1984) and Rinne (1996), the present study offered the opportunity to also explore the relation between increasing L2 proficiency and the tendency to rely on basic uninflected objects. In this respect, it was revealed that the use of nominative singular instead of partitive objects decreased with increasing L2 proficiency. With respect to the German learner corpus, nominative singular objects were significantly less frequently used instead of partitive objects at B2 than at B1 and at B1 than at A2. A significant decrease in the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular objects was for the Dutch learner corpus found when proceeding from A2 to B1. These findings indicate that the German and Dutch learners' tendency to use basic uninflected objects decreases with increasing L2 proficiency. More generally, the findings also suggest that the need to rely on restrictive simplification decreases with increasing L2 proficiency.

Recalling that the principles for object case-marking are essentially similar in Finnish and Estonian (cf. 2.4.1), it however comes unexpected that more than half of the partitive object underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus are also substitutions of nominative singular by of partitive singular. When interpreting these errors like those observed from the remaining learner corpora, this would lead us to the conclusion that the Estonian learners also showed the tendency to leave the object uninflected. When seeking for an alternative explanation, the question rises whether differences between Finnish and Estonian nominal morphology could possibly have had an influence. To sufficiently answer this question, it was indispensable to conduct a detailed analysis on the category 1 errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus.

Analyzing the Estonian learners' category 1 errors in detail, it was revealed that the erroneous object forms often showed a strong resemblance with Estonian partitive singular forms. As for many nouns having a phonologically similar stem in both languages, the Estonian partitive singular form may namely be either completely or largely similar to the Finnish nominative singular. The presence of
phonological L1-L2 similarity versus the absence of morphological L1-L2 similarity thus seems to have triggered negative influence of L1 morphology. In other words, the Estonian learners often seemed to have assumed that in case nouns have a phonologically similar stem in Finnish and Estonian, they are also similarly declined in both languages. Table 31 provides several error examples suggesting negative influence of L1 morphology, complemented by the Finnish and Estonian nominative, genitive and partitive singular noun forms.

As can be inferred from table 31, the Estonian partitive singular forms were sometimes drawn closer to Finnish in that the vowel was changed (e.g. kahvi instead of kohvi) or the consonant length was adapted (paikka instead of paika). Probably because of its phonological similarity to the Estonian noun film, the colloquial Finnish noun filmi (‘movie’) was moreover favoured over its formal variant elokuva. The importance of phonological L1-L2 similarity is also reflected in the erroneous object form kirja (‘book’), which has likely been influenced by the declination of the Estonian noun kiri (‘letter’, part sg kirja). Unlike the Estonian noun kiri, the Estonian noun raamat (‘book’) namely has a phonologically different noun stem than its Finnish equivalent kirja. Although the partitive singular forms of the Estonian nouns elu (‘life’) and rahu (‘peace’) do not fully overlap with the nominative singular forms of their phonologically similar Finnish equivalents elämä and rauha, the fact that the Estonian nouns have identical nominative, genitive and partitive singular forms may probably have caused the Estonian learners to assume that this also holds true in Finnish.

Table 31. Nominative-like objects in the Estonian learner corpus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category 1 -- Error examples (Nominative singular instead of partitive singular)</th>
<th>Noun inflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nominative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sitten keitän *kahvi.  
'Then I make coffee.' | kahvi | kohv | kahvi-n | kohvi | kahlva | kohvi |
| Se saa aiheuttaa paljon *tuska.  
'It may cause a lot of pain.' | tuska | tusk | tuska-n | tusa | tuska-a | tuska |
| Odotan kesän *loppu.  
'I wait for the end of the summer.' | loppu | lopp | loppu-n | loppu | loppu-a | loppu |
| Hän etsii *työpaikka.  
'She/he is looking for a job.' | paikka | paik | paika-n | paiga | paikaa | paika |
Although the coincidental overlap between the Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive singular forms is obvious when considering table 31, it could still be argued that this overlap does not sufficiently prove the existence of negative influence of L1 morphology. Yet, several error patterns and error examples provide additional evidence supporting the claim that the category 1 errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus generally reflect negative influence of L1 morphology rather than a tendency to leave the object uninflected.

In (70), the influence of Estonian is particularly evident in that not merely the object but the whole verb construction shows influence of Estonian. The Estonian noun *jutt* ('story, speech'; part sg *juttu*) has namely a phonologically and semantically similar Finnish equivalent (*juttu*, part sg *juttua*), but the Estonian construction *juttu puhuda* is expressed by the verb *jutella* ('to chat') in Finnish. Although being phonologically similar to the Finnish verb *puhua* ('to talk'), the Estonian verb *puhuda* has a different meaning, i.e. 'to breathe'. The Estonian construction *juttu puhuda* thus literally means 'to breathe (out) words'. Moreover, the Finnish verb *puhua* ('to talk') has a phonologically dissimilar Estonian equivalent (*rääkida*). The seemingly nominative singular object *juttu* was therefore probably meant as the partitive singular form of the Estonian noun *jutt*.
Clear evidence ruling out the possibility that the errors reflect a tendency to rely on uninflected dictionary forms is also manifest in the error examples (71) and (72). In these examples, there is a lack of noun phrase agreement in that the adjective or demonstrative pronoun does, but the noun does not bear partitive case-marking. The partitive singular case-markings of the adjective and the demonstrative pronoun indicate that the nouns elämä ('life') and kirjoituspöytä ('writing desk') were also meant as partitive objects. However, because the partitive singular forms of these nouns would end in a short vowel when being inflected according to the Estonian rules for nominal inflection, the learners probably ended up with the nominative-like forms elämä and kirjoituspöytä. Moreover, the error in (71) could be influenced by the fact that the phonologically similar Estonian noun elu has identical nominative and partitive singular forms. The lack of noun phrase agreement as well as the L1-L2 comparison thus clearly suggests that the erroneous noun forms were influenced by L1 morphology.
Additional evidence for the occurrence of negative influence of L1 morphology was also found in error patterns exemplified in (73) and (74). Of the two objects linked with a conjunction, the one has been realized correctly and the other incorrectly. Remarkably, the partitive case-marked objects *keittoa* and *surua* do not have phonologically similar Estonian equivalents, while the seemingly nominative singular objects *kana* and *tuska* do have phonologically similar noun stems in both Finnish and Estonian. Thus, learners apparently tended to assume that a phonologically similar noun stem also implies similar nominal inflection. It could also be the case that, because of the strong phonological similarity, they used the Estonian partitive form without verifying whether this form was similar or different in Finnish. Evidence suggesting that negative influence of L1 morphology is likely to occur when phonological similarity does but morphological similarity does not exist was also found in Kaivapalu's study (2005) on nominal inflection: The Estonian learners of Finnish as a foreign language produced the highest number of errors when nouns had similar stem in Finnish and Estonian but were inflected differently in both languages.
(73) B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example  Syön tavallisesti keittoja *kana.
 eat-1Sg normally soup-Part.Sg and chicken(Nom.Sg)

Target-like  Syön tavallisesti keittoja kanaa.
 eat-1Sg normally soup-Part.Sg and chicken-Part.Sg

Estonian equiv.  Söön tavaliselt suppi ja kanaa.
 eat-1Sg normally soup-Part.Sg and chicken-Part.Sg

'I normally eat (some) soup and chicken.'

(74) B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example  Kuolema aiheuttaa surua ja *tuska.
 death(Nom.Sg) cause-3Sg grief-Part.Sg and pain(Nom.Sg)

Target-like  Kuolema aiheuttaa surua ja tuskaa.
 death(Nom.Sg) cause-3Sg grief-Part.Sg and pain-Part.Sg

Estonian equiv.  Surm toob muret ja tuska.
 death(Nom.Sg) cause-3Sg grief-Part.Sg and pain-Part.Sg

'Death causes grief and pain.'

Negative influence of L1 morphology was also reflected in error examples such as (75). In (75), the object lapsi ('child') is seemingly a nominative singular form, but comparing the Finnish noun lapsi and its Estonian equivalent laps reveals that the Finnish nominative singular and the Estonian partitive plural forms of these nouns are identical. It is therefore fairly obvious that the Estonian partitive plural form lapsi was used in the Finnish sentence, also because the Finnish verb opettaa and its Estonian equivalent õpetada are both inherently irresultative. The fact that both verbs have the same aspectual reading supports the assumption that a partitive plural rather than an uninflected object was meant to be used. A plural object would also provide the sentence with a more appropriate meaning. The finding that also Estonian partitive plural forms were used in Finnish sentences.
provides stronger evidence for the existence of negative influence of L1 morphology than when only Estonian partitive singular forms would have been transferred.

(75)        A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example       Hän opettea *lapsi.
                    S/he(Nom) teach-3Sg  child(Nom.Sg)

Target-like        Hän opettea lapsia.
                    S/he(Nom) teach-3Sg  child-Part.Pl

Estonian equiv.     Ta õpetab lapsi.
                    S/he(Nom) teach-3Sg  child-Part.Pl

‘She/he teaches children.’

Complementing the coincidental overlap between Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive singular forms exemplified in table 31 with the error examples (70)-(75), the existence of negative influence of L1 morphology is widely supported. On the basis of this, it is justified to interpret the substitutions of partitive singular that are undoubtedly influenced by L1 morphology as due to negative L1 influence. This is not to say that all other category 1 errors are void of negative influence of L1 morphology; in some cases there is just a lack of evidence to determine whether the errors can indeed be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphology.

Nevertheless, in 57% (50/88) out of the category 1 errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus it could with certainty be determined that the learners had actually meant to use a partitive object but produced an erroneous object form that accidentally happened to be identical to the Finnish nominative singular instead. More than half of the category 1 errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus could thus be explained as resulting from negative influence of L1 morphology. Interestingly, these errors were merely found to occur at the lower proficiency levels: 52% occurred at the A2 level, 40% at the B1 level and 8% at the B2 level.
Turning to the partitive singular underuse error rates, it was already revealed that partitive singular was in the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus significantly less frequently replaced by nominative singular than its A2 component ($G^2 (1) = 20.85; p = .0001$). Similarly, the category 1 errors due to negative influence of L1 morphology appeared to occur significantly less frequently in the B1 than in the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 10.78; p = .01$). Yet, the direct statistical evidence for an inverse relationship between negative L1 morphology and increasing L2 proficiency may not be particularly strong but truly existent. Figure 21 shows the category 1 underuse error ratio as subdivided into a part representing the instances of negative L1 morphology and a remaining part. This graph also clearly illustrates the difference between the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus, in which category 1 errors are widely represented and its remaining proficiency components.

Fig. 21. The Estonian learners’ use of nominative singular objects instead of partitive singular objects.
On the use of (genitive-)accusative instead of partitive singular

Partitive singular was in 18% of the partitive underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus, 17% of the partitive underuse errors observed from the German learner corpus and 29% of the partitive underuse errors observed from the Dutch learner corpus found to be replaced by (genitive-)accusative singular. When comparing the partitive object underuse error rates extracted from the overall corpora as well as from the separate proficiency components, partitive singular appeared to be significantly less frequently replaced by (genitive-)accusative singular in the Estonian learner corpus than in the German and Dutch learner corpora. Significant differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus were not found to exist. In addition, substitutions of partitive singular by (genitive-)accusative singular were generally shown to occur to a similar extent across all proficiency levels; underuse errors of this type were merely found to be significantly less frequent in the B2 than in the B1 component of the German learner corpus.

As genitive-accusative and accusative singular are case-endings covered by the restrictive object, errors of this category (category 2) thus directly relate to the object case-alternation. Because the Finnish accusative t-ending is merely used when personal pronouns or the interrogative pronoun kuka functions as the object of the sentence, accusative objects occur marginally in Finnish. As a consequence of this, all category 2 errors turned out to be substitutions of partitive singular by genitive-accusative singular (and not by accusative singular). A detailed error analysis of the category 2 errors also indicated that all three factors affecting the case-marking of the object could have been wrongly interpreted or not have been taken into account. All learner corpora were namely found to be characterized by error examples in which genitive-accusative singular was used in spite of the negative polarity of the sentence, the quantitative unboundedness of the object NP or the aspectual unboundedness of the sentence. In (76), a partitive object was namely required because of the negated predicate en tarvitse ('I do not need'), in (77) because of the unbounded entity denoted by the object (i.e. 'some money') and in (78) because of the inherent irresultativeness of the verb pelätä (‘to fear’).
(76)  **Negative polarity**  
Minä en tarvitse *uuden takin.*  
I(Nom) need-Neg.1Sg new-GenAcc.Sg coat-GenAcc.Sg  
'I do not need a new coat.'

(77)  **Quantitative unboundedness**  
Monet toivovat *rahan syntymäpäivälahjaksi.*  
many-Nom.Pl wish-3Pl money-GenAcc.Sg birthday gift-Transl.Sg  
'Many people are pleased to receive money as a birthday present.'

(78)  **Aspectual unboundedness**  
Hän pelkäsí *kuoleman.*  
S/he(Nom) fear-Past.3Sg death-GenAcc.Sg  
'She/he feared death.'

The significant difference between the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other can be interpreted as positive influence of L1 morphosyntax. While all learner corpora show similar (persisting) category 2 errors, they were found to be significantly less frequently represented in the Estonian learner corpus than in the remaining learner corpora, a difference that can obviously be attributed to the essentially similar Finnish and Estonian object case alternations.

**On the use of nominative plural instead of partitive plural**

Underuse of partitive plural as the case of the object appeared to be significantly less common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the German and Dutch learner corpora. As most of the partitive plural underuse errors were errors in which nominative plural was used instead of partitive plural, substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural were also shown to be significantly less common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the remaining learner corpora. In contrast, significant differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus were not found.

The observed significant differences between the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other indicate the
occurrence of positive L1 influence in the Estonian learner corpus. Probably as a consequence of the similarities between plural object case-marking in Finnish and Estonian, the Estonian learners produced significantly fewer errors than their German and Dutch peers. In both Finnish and Estonian, partitive plural objects are namely licensed in cases of aspectually unbounded sentences or quantitatively unbounded objects. As partitive plural appeared to be significantly less frequently replaced by nominative plural when proceeding from A2 to B2 within the German learner corpus and from A2 to B1 within the Dutch learner corpus, this suggests that the German and Dutch learners gradually started to become familiar with the principles of case-marking of plural objects. This could possibly indicate that they become gradually more aware of the fact that partitive plural objects often denote an unbounded set of entities (e.g. some books).

Taking into consideration that Finnish and Estonian fully overlap with respect to the case-marking of quantitatively unbounded plural objects, it is difficult to address why the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus was also found to be characterized by a significantly higher underuse error rate than its B1 component. A possible explanation might be that particularly at the A2 level, Estonian learners of Finnish might be inclined to use nominative plural as a default plural form, not because they are not aware of the conditions under which partitive plural objects are licensed but simply because they might not yet know how to form the partitive plural. The nominative plural case endings are namely phonologically similar and nominative plural forms are analogously formed in both languages (by adding -t (Finnish) versus -d (Estonian) to the stem), while partitive plural is not only much more difficult to form but also involves different suffixes in Finnish than in Estonian. It might thus possibly be the case that the Estonian learners initially favoured nominative plural objects because of the phonological similarity between Finnish and Estonian nominative plural forms and the lack of phonological similarity between Finnish and Estonian partitive plural forms, an assumption that however cannot be verified on the basis of learner corpus data.

On the use of genitive plural instead of partitive plural

While similar errors were absent from the Estonian learner corpus, 3% of the partitive object underuse errors contained in the German and Dutch learner corpora were errors in which partitive plural was substituted by genitive plural. Example (79) illustrates that these category 4 errors probably result from
overgeneralization of the L2 rules for object case-marking. In (a), the incorrect use of a genitive plural object is contrasted with the target-like use of a partitive plural object. Partitive plural is hereby licensed because the object denotes an unbounded set of entities (i.e. *some cookies*). If the learner would mistakenly have used a restrictive plural object instead of a partitive plural object, then the expected object case would have been nominative plural (b). However, as a genitive-like object is generally licensed in the case of a singular restrictive object (c), genitive plural was probably in an analogous manner used as the case of the plural restrictive object.

Category 4 errors are thus relatively complex in that the partitive plural object was replaced by a restrictive plural object of which the genitive plural case ending results from an overgeneralization of the genitive-like singular restrictive object to plural. The occurrence of errors of this type can therefore be considered explained as the occurrence of intralingual influence. At the same time, the finding that category 4 errors are completely absent from the Estonian learner corpus but not from the other learner corpora suggests positive influence of Estonian morphosyntax. As illustrated in (79d), the equivalent structures would namely be similar in Estonian. Unlike German and Dutch learners of Finnish, Estonian learners therefore have the opportunity to rely on their L1 knowledge.

(79a)

*Error example*  
Jouluna leivomme *pikkuleipien*.  
Christmas-Ess.Sg bake-1Pl cookie-*Gen.Pl*

*Target-like*  
Jouluna leivomme pikkuleipiä.  
Christmas-Ess.Sg bake-1Pl cookie-*Part.Pl*

'During Christmas time we bake cookies.'

(79b)

*Comparison ex1*  
Jouluna leivomme *pikkuleivät*.  
Christmas-Ess.Sg bake-1Pl cookie-*Nom.Pl*
(79c) 

Comparison ex2  

**Jouluna leivomme kakun.**  
Christmas-Ess.Sg bake-1Pl cake-GenAcc.Sg  
'During Christmas time, we bake a cake.'

(79d)  

Estonian equivalent sententences  

**Jõulude ajal valmistame väikesaiu.**  
Christmas-Gen.Pl time-All.Sg bake-1Pl cookie-Part.Pl  
'During Christmas time we bake cookies.'

**Jõulude ajal teeme koogi.**  
Christmas-Ess.Sg bake-1Pl cake-GenAcc.Sg  
'During Christmas time we bake a cake.'

The category of remaining partitive object underuse errors

The category of remaining partitive object underuse errors covers the underuse errors that do not relate to the object case alternation. Out of the 174 partitive object underuse errors contained in the Estonian learner corpus, 25 (i.e. 14%) were classified as remaining underuse errors, while 8% (50/599) versus 9% (25/280) of the underuse errors observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora were classified as remaining partitive object underuse errors. Although only a small number of the partitive object underuse errors were classified as remaining underuse errors, the errors were nevertheless studied in more detail in order to detect potential patterns shared by all groups of learners or merely shared by a specific group of learners.

Table 32 serves as an illustration of the category of remaining partitive object underuse errors. By means of examples selected from the different learner corpora, several patterns were detected. As exemplified in table 32, a set of different case endings was used instead of the partitive case. Although this finding seems to imply that the category of remaining underuse errors can be considered nothing more than a set of heterogeneous errors put together for the mere reason that they do not fit into any of the other error categories, this is not an appropriate conclusion. At first, one obvious common characteristic is that all incorrect case
endings are locative case endings. Moreover, careful inspection shows that many of these seemingly heterogeneous errors are motivated by common underlying patterns.

Considering the examples of remaining partitive object underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus, table 32 shows that Estonian valency patterns have sometimes incorrectly been overgeneralized to Finnish, particularly in cases of phonologically similar verbs (e.g. *mielyttää* versus *meeldida*) or phonologically similar verb constructions (e.g. *käydä koulu* versus *käla koolis*). Similar transfer of Estonian valency patterns was also found by Nissilä (1999), who administered an elicitation task to 35 Estonian university students of Finnish as a foreign language.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error example</th>
<th>Finnish</th>
<th>German</th>
<th>Estonian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hän ampui *Pentille-All.Sg</td>
<td>'He shot at Pentti.'</td>
<td>Se ei auta *hänelle-All.Sg</td>
<td>'It does not help (for) him.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He menevät katsomaan *elokuvaan-Ill.Sg</td>
<td>'They went to see the movie.'</td>
<td>Kaipaan *teille kaikille-All.Pl</td>
<td>'I miss you all.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poika käy vielä koulussa-Iness.Sg</td>
<td>'They boy is still at school.'</td>
<td>Monet ihmiset arvostelevat *toisista.Elat.Sg</td>
<td>'They judge each other.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hän rupesi hakkamaan *puuhun-Ill.Sg</td>
<td>'He began to cut into the tree.'</td>
<td>Hän meni *latinakoulussa-Iness.Sg</td>
<td>'He went to the Latin school.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veli käy *koulussa-Iness.Sg</td>
<td>'My brother is at school.'</td>
<td>*Minulle-All mielyttää iso puutarha.</td>
<td>'I fancy a big garden.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Translation**

- **Dutch**: 'to shoot at'
- **German**: 'to help somebody'
- **Estonian**: 'to be at school'

**L1 equivalent**

- **Dutch**: schieten op
- **German**: (jemandem) helfen
- **Estonian**: käida koolis (+ inessive)
The error examples observed from the remaining learner corpora (cf. table 32) indicate that particularly when a Finnish irrsutative verb corresponded to a prepositional verb in German or Dutch, the partitive object was likely to be replaced by a locative complement. The exact case endings of locative complements hereby seem to depend on to which Finnish case ending the L1 preposition was taken to correspond. External locatives were for example particularly used to refer to animate entities (e.g. *ampua 'Pentille 'shoot at Pentti') and dynamic locatives in the case of L1 prepositions indicating dynamic movement. Although focusing on valency patterns, these examples of negative L1 morphosyntax clearly resemble the findings from a study focusing on spatial relationships conducted by Jarvis and Odlin in 2000. The Finnish learners of English involved in that study namely appeared to often establish similarity relations between the underlying semantics of Finnish locative case endings and English prepositions. Sabourin, Stowe and De Haan (2006) use the term deep transfer to refer to the transfer of abstract underlying features.

In addition to these assumed correspondences between L1 prepositions and L2 locative case endings, the partitive object of the verb *auttaa (‘to help (somebody)’) was in the German learner corpus multiple times found to be replaced by an allative complement, which can probably be motivated by the fact that the Finnish allative and the German dative case share the thematic role of beneficiary/recipient in this case. Muikku-Werner (2003) made exactly the same observation on the basis of her interview data from Russian learners of Finnish. In her paper, she discusses *auttaa toiselle-All.Sg (‘to help the other’) as a clear example of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax, because the Russian equivalent verb also takes a dative complement bearing the thematic role of beneficiary/recipient.

When comparing the error examples observed from the different learner corpora, all learner corpora thus contain error examples that seem to be motivated by assumed L1-L2 similarities. The instances of negative L1 influence observed from the Estonian learner corpus are however not completely similar to those observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora in that assumed similarities between L1-L2 valency patterns are contrasted by assumed similarities between L1 prepositions and L2 locative case endings. However, the error examples also indicate that L1 influence cannot always fully be disentangled from intralingual influence. The Finnish construction käydä koulua (‘to be at school’) for example turned out to be problematic for all groups of learners. The erroneous construction *käydä koulussa can nevertheless not only very well be motivated when taking
the corresponding L1 constructions into account but also when taking into account that the Finnish verb käydä takes an inessive complement when used in its concrete sense (e.g. käydä kaupassa ‘to go to the shop ~ to visit the shop’). The sentence Hän meni latinakoulussa observed from the German learner corpus is particularly interesting in this respect, because the inessive case ending might be an overgeneralization of the construction käydä jossakin (‘to go somewhere’), while the verb mennä (‘to go’) might have been chosen to express the movement toward something incorporated in the accusative article of the German construction in die Schule gehen (Lit.: ‘to go to school’).

5.2.6 Conclusions and summary of the main findings

Partitive objects were found to be significantly overrepresented in the Estonian learner corpus and significantly underrepresented in the remaining learner corpora. Partitive object-requiring contexts were also significantly overrepresented in the Estonian learner corpus, but they occurred to a similar extent in the German and Dutch learner corpora as in the reference corpus. Moreover, the Estonian learner corpus showed significantly lower partitive object over- and underuse error rates than both remaining learner corpora and the Dutch learner corpus significantly lower partitive object over- and underuse error rates than the German learner corpus.

The vast majority of the overuse errors (80–87%) was found relate to the object case alternation in that the partitive was used instead of one of the case endings of the restrictive object. In the remaining cases, partitive objects were used to replace locative verb complements or postpositional phrases. In all learner corpora, the frequently occurring verb pitää (‘to like’) was for example often used with a partitive object rather than with an elative complement, possibly analogously with the semantically similar verb rakastaa (‘to love’) that does take a partitive object. Many of the partitive object overuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus were nevertheless found to relate to differences between the Finnish and Estonian aspectual object case alternation. Finnish quasi-resultative verbs such as muistaa (‘to remember’) were for instance often used with a partitive rather than with a restrictive object, probably because these verbs are irresultative and take partitive objects in Estonian. Overuse errors that could be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax occurred to a similar extent across all proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus. Yet, overuse of the partitive as the case of the object was significantly less common in
Estonian learner corpus than in the remaining learner corpora, but those partitive overuse errors that did occur in the Estonian learner corpus could often be attributed to differences between the Finnish and Estonian aspectual object case alternation. On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that the Estonian learners’ relative lack of partitive object overuse errors indicates positive influence of L1 morphosyntax, while the overuse error pattern reflects negative influence of L1 morphosyntax.

As for partitive object underuse errors, these were classified into five error categories on the basis of the case endings that were used to replace the partitive case. Apart from the category of remaining underuse errors, all of these error categories corresponded directly or indirectly to one of the singular or plural case endings of the restrictive object. The use of genitive plural as the case of the object was hereby explained as an analogy with the genitive-accusative as the case of the singular restrictive object. Replacements of partitive plural by genitive plural were observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora but completely absent from the Estonian learner corpus. Considering the three main underuse error categories, partitive singular was in the Estonian learner corpus significantly less frequently replaced by nominative singular, genitive-accusative singular and nominative plural than in the remaining learner corpora. As for the successive proficiency components of each learner corpus, the error rates corresponding to the three main underuse error categories were found to be lower at B1 than at A2, and for the German learner corpus also lower at B2 than at B1.

The use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular objects received special emphasis for the reason that this error category covered a high proportion of all partitive object underuse errors. As for the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular objects in the German and Dutch learner corpus, it was argued that underuse errors of this category reflect a tendency to rely on basic uninflected objects for the sake of simplification. Nominative singular forms namely correspond to the basic, uninflected dictionary forms of nouns and adjectives. Because the German learners at each successive proficiency level (A2-B1-B2) significantly less frequently resorted to uninflected instead of partitive objects, and the Dutch learners significantly less frequently at B1 than at A2, it was suggested that the learners’ need to rely on basic uninflected objects decreases with increasing L2 proficiency.

In contrast, the Estonian learners’ errors in which nominative singular was used instead of partitive singular were explained in a different way. A detailed analysis namely revealed a strong resemblance between many of the erroneous
object forms and the partitive singular of Estonian equivalent nouns. Because of phonological shortening processes that have taken place in Estonian but not in Finnish, there is namely considerable overlap between the nominative singular forms of certain Finnish nouns and the partitive singular forms of their Estonian equivalents. On the basis of this analysis, it could in 57% of the errors with absolute certainty be determined that a partitive object was actually meant to be used but a nominative-like object was accidentally realized. These underuse errors were interpreted as instances of negative influence of L1 morphology. Nouns having a phonologically similar stem in Finnish and Estonian particularly seemed to act as a trigger for negative influence of L1 morphology to occur. When merely drawing upon the errors that could with absolute certainty be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphology, these were found to occur significantly less frequently in the B1 than in the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus, not only suggesting an inverse relationship between negative influence of L1 morphology and L2 proficiency but also suggesting that this kind of negative influence of L1 morphology is not particularly persistent.

To conclude, the analyses revealed conspicuous differences between the use of partitive objects in the learners of Finnish from a closely related L1 background (Estonian) and the learners of Finnish from non-related L1 backgrounds (German and Dutch). Probably as a consequence of the similarities between Finnish and Estonian object case-marking, the Estonian learners produced significantly fewer partitive object errors than their German and Dutch peers. Although presenting seemingly similar error patterns, the frequent use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular observed from all learner corpora was found to be due to negative influence of L1 morphology in the Estonian learner corpus and to simplification in the remaining learner corpora.

5.3 Estonian, German and Dutch learners’ use of partitive subjects

5.3.1 The use, overuse and underuse of partitive subjects

An overview of the use of partitive subjects in the learner corpora and the native Finnish reference corpus is provided in figure 22. The category partitive subjects represented in this figure covers the actual occurrence of partitive case-marked subjects and the category partitive-requiring contexts the contexts in which partitive was required as the case of the subject. As the former category leaves
open whether or not the partitive subjects were correctly used and the latter whether or not the partitive case was indeed realized, these categories must be related to the correctly used partitive subjects in order to obtain the error frequencies represented in the data table. Yet, *partitive subject overuse errors* can be characterized as incorrectly used partitive subjects and *partitive subject underuse errors* as PRCs for which the partitive has not been realized as the case of the subject.

As can be inferred from figure 22, both partitive case-marked subjects and partitive-required contexts are more common in the German and Estonian learner corpora than in the reference corpus, and less common in the Dutch learner corpus. Furthermore, partitive subject underuse errors occur to a similar extent in all learner corpora, whereas partitive subject overuse errors are relatively frequent in the German learner corpus and virtually absent from the Estonian learner corpus. As a consequence, the German learner corpus contains more over- than underuse errors, while underuse errors are more frequently represented in the Estonian learner corpus. In contrast, both error categories are equally common in the Dutch learner corpus. Statistical testing was employed to determine potential significant differences between the learner corpora and the reference corpus.

Statistical testing revealed that partitive subjects were, in comparison to the native reference corpus, significantly more frequently used in the German learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 55.94; \ p = .0001$) and in the Estonian learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 15.20; \ p = .0001$). However, no significant differences were found to exist between the use of partitive case-marked subjects in the Dutch learner corpus and the reference corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 3.81$). In addition, partitive subject-requiring contexts appeared to occur significantly more frequently in both the Estonian and German learner corpus than in the reference corpus. Nevertheless, the difference between the Estonian learner corpus and the reference corpus was found to be more strongly significant ($\chi^2 (1) = 55.90; \ p = .0001$) than the difference between the German learner corpus and the reference corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 8.40; \ p = .01$). Also with regard to partitive-requiring contexts, there were no significant differences between the Dutch learner corpus and the reference corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 4.49$).
The use of partitive subjects, PRCs and partitive over- and underuse errors at different levels of L2 proficiency is illustrated in figure 23. As shown in this figure, both partitive case-marked subjects and PRCs occur substantially more frequently in the higher proficiency components of the German learner corpus than in its A2 component. In contrast, the use of partitive subjects seems to remain fairly stable across the different proficiency components of the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus. Drawing statistical comparisons between the learner corpora and the reference corpus, it was revealed that the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus contained significantly more partitive subjects than the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 14.37; p = .001$), but that this was not the case for its remaining proficiency components. PRCs appeared to occur significantly more frequently in the A2, B1 and B2 components of the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 9.28; p = .01$; $G^2 (1) = 40.74; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 8.07; p = .01$, respectively), but to a similar extent in the C1 and C2 components of the Estonian learner corpus as in the native reference corpus. Furthermore, partitive subjects were shown to occur significantly more frequently in the B1 and B2 components of the German learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 48.17; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 22.00; p = .0001$, respectively). As compared to the reference corpus, PRCs were found to occur significantly less
frequently in the A2 component of the German learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 7.80; p = .01$) and significantly more frequently in its B1 component ($\chi^2 (1) = 11.66; p = .001$). In contrast, none of the proficiency components of the Dutch learner corpus differed significantly from the native reference corpus with respect to the occurrence of partitive case-marked subjects or the occurrence of PRCs. Comparing the successive proficiency components of each learner corpus, no significant differences were found for the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus, but the B1 component of the German learner was found to contain significantly more partitive subjects and PRCs than the A2 component of this corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 13.99; p = .001$ and $\chi^2 (1) = 16.25; p = .0001$, respectively).

As also illustrated in figure 23, the relative partitive subject overuse and underuse error frequencies are relatively similar in all proficiency components of the Dutch learner corpus. While the underuse error frequencies are in each proficiency component of the Estonian learner corpus (except for its C2 component) higher than the overuse error frequencies, the German learner corpus shows a completely opposite pattern. Moreover, particularly the B1 component of the German learner corpus is characterized by high relative error frequencies. Statistical comparisons concerning the occurrence of partitive subject over- and underuse errors will however be drawn on the basis of error rates that take the varying amounts of partitive subjects and PRCs into account rather than on the basis of these relative error frequencies.
Summarizing, the frequency analysis revealed that there were no significant differences between the frequencies of occurrence of partitive subjects and PRCs extracted from the Dutch learner corpus and the native Finnish reference corpus. However, both partitive subjects and PRCs were found to occur significantly more frequently in the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus, indicating a significant overrepresentation of partitive subjects in the Estonian learner corpus. Also in the German learner corpus both categories were significantly more frequent than in the reference corpus, but the difference between the PRCs observed from the German learner corpus and the reference corpus appeared to be much smaller than the difference between partitive case-marked subjects, suggesting that partitive subject overuse errors are fairly common in the German learner corpus. Yet, it was indeed shown that the German learner corpus did not only contain more partitive overuse errors than underuse errors but also more overuse errors than the other learner corpora. Unlike partitive overuse errors, partitive subject underuse errors seemed to occur to a fairly similar extent in all learner corpora.
5.3.2 Over- vs. underuse of the partitive as the case of the subject

Partitive subject over- and underuse error rates were calculated by relating the number of partitive subject overuse errors to the total number of partitive case-marked subjects and the partitive subject underuse errors to the partitive subject-requiring contexts. The error rates thus basically reflect the percentage of incorrectly used partitive subjects (partitive subject overuse error rate) and the percentage of PRCs in which the partitive was not realized as the case of the subject (partitive subject underuse error rate). The over- and underuse error rates extracted from the proficiency components as well as from the learner corpora as a whole are shown in figure 24. In order to enable reliable comparisons between the learner corpora, error rates based on the A2-B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus were also added.

Figure 24 shows that, on the whole, approximately 6% (44/700) of the partitive subjects in the Estonian learner corpus, 39% (236/606) of the partitive subjects in the German learner corpus and 27% (84/310) of the partitive subjects in the Dutch learner corpus were used incorrectly. In addition, the partitive was not realized as the case of the subject in 18% (140/796) of the PRCs occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, and in 26% (131/501 vs. 81/307) of the PRCs contained in the German and Dutch learner corpora. While the underuse error rates are in the
lower proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus higher than the overuse error rates, the German learner corpus shows at all proficiency levels lower under- than overuse error rates, and the Dutch learner corpus fairly similar over- and underuse error rates. In all learner corpora, the error rates decrease with increasing L2 proficiency.

As for the occurrence of partitive subject overuse errors, statistical testing revealed that the Estonian learner corpus was characterized by a significantly lower overuse error rate than both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 173.76; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 65.96; p = .0001$). When merely involving the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, this did not lead to differences in the levels of significance. Although the Dutch learner corpus showed a significantly lower overuse error rate than the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 8.60; p = .01$), the test statistics indicate relatively small differences between these learner corpora, and at none of the separate proficiency levels could significant differences be determined. In contrast, the Estonian learner corpus was found to significantly differ from both the German and the Dutch learner corpus at all proficiency levels (A2: $G^2 (1) = 17.62; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 8.93; p = .01$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 101.64; p = .001$ and $G^2 (1) = 33.31; p = .0001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 51.12; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 17.92; p = .0001$). Although the Dutch learner corpus did not exhibit any significant differences between its successive proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus showed a significantly higher partitive subject overuse error rate at the A2 than at the B1 level ($G^2 (1) = 9.56; p = .01$) and the German learner corpus a significantly higher overuse error rate at the B2 than at B1 level ($G^2 (1) = 7.42; p = .0001$).

With respect to the occurrence of partitive subject underuse errors, the Estonian learner corpus also exhibited a significantly lower underuse error rate than both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 10.53; p = .01$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 8.09; p = .01$), and the Dutch learner corpus a significantly lower underuse error rate than the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 9.70; p = .01$). When restricting to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus in the statistical comparisons, significant differences between the partitive underuse error rate observed from the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora were however no longer found to exist. As for the partitive subject underuse error rates calculated for each separate level of proficiency, significant differences were neither observed between the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus nor between the German and the Dutch learner corpus; the only significant difference between the Estonian and the German learner corpus was found at the level of B1 ($G^2 (1) = 9.56; p = .01$).
Comparing the successive proficiency components of each learner corpus, it was revealed that the Estonian learner corpus was characterized by a significantly lower underuse error rate at B1 than at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 9.51; p = .001$) and the German learner corpus by a significantly lower underuse error rate at B2 than at B1 ($G^2 (1) = 7.42; p = .01$), but that the Dutch learner corpus did not show significant differences between its successive proficiency components.

With respect to the difference between partitive overuse and underuse error rates, there were no significant differences within the Dutch learner corpus. The German learner corpus as a whole was found to be characterized by a significantly higher overuse than underuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 13.80; p = .001$), but significant differences could however not be determined within the proficiency component of the learner corpus. In contrast, the Estonian learner corpus did not only show a significantly higher overall underuse error rate than overuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 31.06; p = .0001$), but significantly higher under- than overuse error rates were also observed at the levels A2 ($G^2 (1) = 8.52; p = .01$), B1 ($G^2 (1) = 21.33; p = .0001$) and B2 ($G^2 (1) = 11.84; p = .001$) as well as within the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 41.06; p = .0001$).

In short, the Estonian learner corpus showed significantly lower error rates than both the German and the Dutch learner corpus, and the Dutch learner corpus significantly lower error rates than the German learner corpus. While the Estonian learner corpus was furthermore found to reflect significantly lower over- and underuse error rates at B1 than at A2 and the German learner corpus significantly lower over- and underuse error rates at B2 than at B1, the Dutch learner corpus did not show any significant differences between its successive proficiency components. Furthermore, significantly higher under- than overuse error rates were observed from the Estonian learner corpus, significantly higher over- than underuse error rates from the German learner corpus and comparable over- and underuse error rates from the Dutch learner corpus. Altogether, these findings seem to indicate conspicuous differences between the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other. As more elaborative error analyses are needed to gain additional evidence for and insights into these differences, partitive subject overuse and underuse error patterns were analyzed in more detail.
5.3.3 Partitive subject overuse error patterns

In 79% (66/84) of the partitive subject overuse errors observed from the Dutch learner corpus, the partitive was used as the case of the basic subject. As for the remaining 21% (18/84) of the partitive subject overuse errors, the partitive was used as the case of an existential subject denoting a bounded entity or set of entities. Similarly, 81% (190/236) of the incorrectly used partitive subjects contained in the German learner corpus were basic subjects; the remaining 19% (46/236) were existential subjects. Yet, a fourth (11/44) of the incorrectly used partitive subjects extracted from the Estonian learner corpus were basic subjects and three fourths (33/44) existential subjects. Error rates reflecting the overuse of the partitive as the case of basic and existential subjects (in relation to the total number of partitive subjects) are provided in figure 25. The figure shows overall error ratios as well as ratios representing different levels of L2 proficiency.

Fig. 25. Overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject and the existential subject.
As clearly revealed in figure 25, the divergence concerning the overuse of the partitive as the case of the subject in the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other mainly resides in whether or not the partitive was often used as the case of the basic subject. As for the German and Dutch learner corpora, the partitive was namely at all proficiency levels (A2 and B1 in particular) often used as the case of the basic subject. In contrast, the Estonian learner corpus nearly failed to show similar overuse of the partitive as the case of the subject. In addition, figure 25 illustrates that the overuse of the partitive as the case of existential subjects is in neither of the learner corpora particularly frequent.

Statistical testing revealed that the overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject was significantly more common in the German and the Dutch learner corpus than in both the A2-B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 196.28; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 90.26; p = .0001$) and the Estonian learner corpus as a whole ($G^2 (1) = 207.21; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 91.98; p = .0001$, respectively), but also significantly more common in the German learner corpus than in the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 7.78; p = .01$). As can be inferred from the test statistics, the differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus were however relatively small. While the Estonian learner corpus was at all proficiency levels shown to significantly differ from the German and Dutch learner corpora (A2: $G^2 (1) = 35.99; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 25.04; p = .0001$; B1: $G^2 (1) = 115.77; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 46.52; p = .0001$; B2: $G^2 (1) = 43.63; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 17.44; p = .0001$), significant differences between the separate proficiency components of the German and the Dutch learner corpus could not be observed. In addition, overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject appeared to be significantly more common in the B1 than in the B2 component of the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 7.68; p = .01$), while significant differences between successive proficiency components could not be observed from the other learner corpora.

Overuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject occurred significantly more frequently in the German learner corpus than in both the A2-B2 components of the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 16.80; p = .0001$), the Estonian learner corpus as a whole ($G^2 (1) = 22.13; p = .0001$), but to a similar extent in the German and Dutch learner corpora ($G^2 (1) = 5.91$) and in the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora ($G^2 (1) = 1.75$). Considering the overuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject at different levels of proficiency, the error rates extracted from the German learner corpus significantly exceeded
those extracted from the Estonian learner corpus at both the B1 level ($G^2 (1) = 18.44; p = .000$) and the B2 level ($G^2 (1) = 9.87; p = .01$). Furthermore, overuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject appeared to be significantly more frequent in the A2 than in the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 16.36; p = .0001$), while significant differences between successive proficiency components were not observed from the remaining learner corpora.

### 5.3.4 Partitive subject underuse error patterns

On the basis of the case endings that were used to replace the partitive case, the partitive subject underuse errors were classified into three error categories. Partitive subject underuse errors that were neither substitutions of partitive singular by nominative singular (category 1 errors) nor substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural (category 2 errors) were classified as remaining underuse errors. As shown in table 33, these remaining underuse errors represented a marginal 4–5% of all partitive subject underuse errors. As for all learner corpora, most partitive subject underuse errors appeared to be replacements of partitive plural by nominative plural (ranging from 53 % in the Dutch learner corpus to 65% in the Estonian learner corpus), but also substitutions of partitive singular by nominative singular accounted for a substantial proportion of the underuse errors.

#### Table 33. Partitive subject underuse error categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partitive subject underuse error category</th>
<th>Learner Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 nom sg</td>
<td>42 % (34/81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part sg</td>
<td>'I have little free time.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 nom pl</td>
<td>53 % (43/81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>part pl</td>
<td>'There are books on the table.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 remaining</td>
<td>5 % (4/81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of course</td>
<td>'Of course there is champagne.'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 33. Partitive subject underuse error categories
Modifying the error classification represented in table 33 into dichotomous underuse error rates, the underuse errors were related to the number of contexts requiring a partitive singular or a partitive plural subject rather than to the total number of partitive subject underuse errors. Figure 26 provides an overview of these underuse error rates. As illustrated in this figure, partitive singular was in 12% (48/389) of the partitive singular-requiring contexts represented in the Estonian learner corpus and 23% of the corresponding contexts contained in both the German and Dutch learner corpus (55/242 vs. 36/158) not realized as the case of the subject. With 31–39% non-realized contexts for partitive plural subjects, the overall error rates indicating underuse of partitive plural turned out to be relatively higher. Also all separate proficiency components (except for the C2 component of the Estonian learner corpus) are shown to be characterized by higher underuse error rates for partitive plural than for partitive singular. Nonetheless, the partitive plural underuse error rates generally seem to decrease more quickly with increasing L2 proficiency than the partitive singular underuse error rates.

Fig. 26. Underuse of partitive singular and partitive plural as the case of the existential subject.
Statistical testing revealed that although the Estonian learner corpus as a whole showed a significantly lower partitive singular underuse error rate than both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 9.55; p = .01$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 7.41; p = .01$), narrowing down the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus merely revealed a significant difference between the Estonian and the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 7.39; p = .01$). No significant differences were observed between the German and the Dutch learner corpus. Considering the separate proficiency components, it was revealed that only the B1 components of the Estonian and German learner corpora differed significantly ($G^2 (1) = 8.38; p = .01$). Significant differences between successive proficiency components were not observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora, but the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus was found to show a significantly higher underuse error rate than its B1 component ($G^2 (1) = 8.38; p = .01$).

With respect to the underuse of partitive plural as the case of the subject, no significant differences were found to exist between the underuse error rates extracted from the respective learner corpora. Moreover, the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora also failed to show any significant differences between successive proficiency components, while the German learner corpus was exhibited a significantly higher underuse error rate at B1 than at B2 ($G^2 (1) = 8.44; p = .01$).

The underuse of the partitive in negated sentence contexts

On the whole, 81% (114/140) of the partitive subject underuse error observed from the Estonian learner corpus, 76% (99/131) of the underuse errors observed from the German learner corpus and 75% (61/81) of the underuse errors observed from the Dutch learner corpus were made in affirmative sentence contexts. A substantial smaller proportion of the partitive subject underuse errors (19–25%) was thus made in negated sentence contexts. In figure 27, the underuse of the partitive as the case of the subject in negated and affirmative contexts has alternatively been related to the number of negated and affirmative PRCs rather than to the total number of partitive subject underuse errors. The error rate of the C2 component of the Estonian learner corpus is not represented in the figure because of the small number of negated contexts in this proficiency component (one out of five PRCs was not realized).
As shown in figure 27, the partitive was in 10% (26/265) of the negated existential sentence contexts occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, 28% (32/115) of those occurring in the German learner corpus and 22% (20/90) of those occurring in the Dutch learner corpus not realized as the case of the subject. Furthermore, the partitive was replaced by another case in 22% (114/522) of the affirmative PRCs occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, in 54% (99/182) of the affirmative PRCs contained in the German learner corpus and 47% (61/130) of the affirmative PRCs occurring in the Dutch learner corpus. As also illustrated in figure 27, the Estonian learner corpus shows at all proficiency levels lower error rates than the German and Dutch learner corpora, and all learner corpora show lower underuse error rates in negated than in affirmative contexts. While the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora are characterized by decreasing error rates when proceeding from one proficiency level to the other, the German learner corpus shows a U-shaped pattern in that both error rates are higher at B1 than at A2 and B2.

Statistical testing revealed that with respect to both negated and affirmative contexts, underuse of the partitive as the case of the subject was significantly less common in the Estonian learner corpus than in both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 15.45; \ p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 32.65; \ p = .01$, respectively) and the
Dutch learner corpus \((G^2 (1) = 7.11; \ p = .01\) and \(G^2 (1) = 21.13; \ p = .01,\) respectively) but just as common in the German learner corpus as in the Dutch learner corpus \((G^2 (1) = 0.63\) and \(G^2 (1) = 0.83).\) When restricting to the A2-B1 part of the Estonian learner corpus, there was no longer a significant difference between the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus with respect to the underuse of partitive subjects in negated contexts \((G^2 (1) = 6.39).\) While the Estonian learner corpus was at the B1 level with respect to both negated and affirmative sentence contexts found to exhibit significantly lower underuse error rates than the German learner corpus \((G^2 (1) = 22.40; \ p = .0001\) and \(G^2 (1) = 24.36; \ p = .0001),\) at the B2 level, the Estonian learner corpus appeared to significantly differ from both the German and the Dutch learner corpus as far as affirmative sentence contexts were concerned \((G^2 (1) = 13.91; \ p = .001\) and \(G^2 (1) = 11.09; \ p = .001\).\) The only significant difference between successive proficiency components was found in that the Estonian learner corpus showed a significantly lower error rate at B1 than at A2 with regard to negated sentence contexts \((G^2 (1) = 11.41; \ p = .0001).\)

In addition, all learner corpora showed significantly lower underuse error rates in negated than in affirmative contexts (Estonian LC: \(G^2 (1) = 15.82; \ p = .0001\); German LC: \(G^2 (1) = 12.03; \ p = .001\); Dutch LC: \(G^2 (1) = 9.39; \ p = .01).\) As indicated by the test statistics, the differences were however largest within the Estonian learner corpus and smallest within the Dutch learner corpus. Drawing comparisons at each proficiency level, significant differences were merely found within the B1 components of the Estonian learner corpus \((G^2 (1) = 20.69; \ p = .0001)\) and the Dutch learner corpus \((G^2 (1) = 7.37; \ p = .01).\)

5.3.5 Interpretation and elaboration of the error analyses

Overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject

As outlined in 2.4.2, Finnish and Estonian are characterized by a similar nominative-partitive subject case alternation, which merely applies to existential subjects. Basic subjects are non-alternating and always appear in nominative singular or plural. The nominative singular has in both languages a zero ending \((Ø);\) the nominative plural ends in \(-t\) in Finnish and in \(-d\) in Estonian. With respect to the case-marking of basic subjects, there is thus a one-to-one correspondence between Finnish and Estonian. From the error analyses, it was not only revealed that the Estonian learner corpus was characterized by significantly lower partitive
subject overuse error rates than the German and Dutch learner corpora but even by a virtual lack of partitive subject overuse errors. The observed differences appeared to be due to the fact that German and Dutch learners often used the partitive as the case of the basic subject, while the Estonian learners did not. The virtual absence of partitive subject overuse errors from the Estonian learner corpus can therefore clearly be interpreted as positive influence of L1 morphosyntax.

**Overuse of partitive singular as the case of the basic subject**

From the German and Dutch learner corpora, many partitive subject overuse errors were observed in which partitive singular rather than nominative singular was used as the case of the basic subject. As for most of these errors, the German and the Dutch learners seem to erroneously have considered the partitive singular as the default form. As illustrated in the error examples (80) and (81), this particularly happened when the subject was either a high-frequent noun (cf. (80)) or a relative or interrogative pronoun (cf. (81)). Because constructions like opiskella suomea ('study Finnish') frequently occur in texts intended for beginning learners of Finnish, beginning learners may in particular have encountered the partitive singular form suomea more often than its nominative singular form suomi. The partitive singular form may therefore not only be more familiar to beginning learners of Finnish than the basic dictionary form, but also more established. In a similar vein, the partitive singular form of the pronoun mitä frequently occurs in Finnish, not only in general but also particularly in phrases frequently encountered by beginning learners of Finnish (e.g. Mitä opiskelet? 'What do you study?'), so that beginning learners may be more familiar with the partitive singular form mitä than with the nominative singular form of the interrogative pronoun (i.e. mikä 'what'). Because the nominative and partitive singular forms of the interrogative pronoun mikä are phonologically very similar, the difference between them may furthermore easily remain unnoticed to the beginning learner. Taking these considerations into account, it is therefore likely that the German and Dutch learners were often not even aware of using the partitive singular form of the respective nouns or pronouns.
(80) A2 component of the German learner corpus

Error example  *Suomea on vaikea kieli.

Finnish-Part.Sg be-3Sg difficult(Nom.Sg) language(Nom.Sg)

Target-like  Suomi on vaikea kieli.

Finnish(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg difficult(Nom.Sg) language(Nom.Sg)

'Finnish is a difficult language.'

(81) B1 component of the German learner corpus

Error example  En tiedä *mitä on vaihtoehto.

know-Neg.1Sg what-Part.Sg be-3Sg alternative(Nom.Sg)

Target-like  En tiedä mikä on vaihtoehto.

know-Neg.1Sg what(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg alternative(Nom.Sg)

'I don't know what the alternative is.'

In addition to the error examples discussed in the preceding, the German and Dutch learner corpora also contained few partitive subject overuse errors reflecting confusion between the existential sentence and the basic transitive or intransitive sentence. A clear example of such confusion was observed from the B1 component of the German learner corpus and is shown in (82). The produced sentence is a basic transitive sentence and its subject should therefore appear in nominative singular. In addition to this basic transitive sentence (cf. 'target-like 1'), a semantically similar sentence could however also be formulated (cf. 'target-like 2'). In this existential variant, the existential subject would indeed appear in partitive singular because of the negative polarity of the sentence. Thus, the learner was not that much wrong but he or she merely blended the target-like basic transitive and existential sentences, which is also reflected in that the negative element *ei was placed in front of the subject (i.e. *ei ketään opiskelijaa saa) rather than in front of the predicate (i.e. kukaan opiskelija ei saa).
Error example (B1 component of the German learner corpus)

*Ei ketään opiskelijaa saa niin paljon rahaa.
no student-Part.Sg receive-3Sg that much-Adv money-Part.Sg

Target-like 1 (basic intransitive sentence)

Kukaan opiskelija ei saa niin paljon rahaa.
no student(Nom.Sg) receive-Neg.3Sg that much-Adv money-Part.Sg

'Nobody receives that much money.'

Target-like 2 (existential sentence)

Ei ole ketään opiskelijaa, joka saa niin paljon rahaa.
be-3Sg no student-Part.Sg that(Nom.Sg) receive-3Sg that much-Adv money-Part.Sg

'There is no single student that receives that much money.'

In the marginal cases observed from the Estonian learner corpus in which the partitive seemed to have been used as the case of a basic subject, the subject was generally either a noun ending in -a (cf. the error examples (83) and (84) or an indefinite pronoun (cf. the error examples (85) and (86). As far as nouns with a stem ending in -a/-ä were concerned, the errors should nevertheless rather be considered phonological errors than morphosyntactic errors. Vowel length could namely have been problematic for the Estonian learners of Finnish, as there are several differences between Finnish and Estonian in this respect. Due to several apocope processes, nouns with a stem ending in -a have identical nominative, genitive and partitive singular forms in Estonian. This is however not the case in Finnish, because similar phonological processes have not taken place during the historical development of the Finnish language. It might therefore either have been the case that the Estonian learners were familiar with the partitive singular forms of the nouns in question and erroneously assumed that the nominative singular forms would be identical, or that they have simply assumed that nouns ending in a short vowel in Estonian also end in a long vowel in Finnish. Additional evidence suggesting that errors as (83) and (84) are rather phonological than morphosyntactic errors is manifest in the lack of noun phrase agreement in (84). Because the nominative singular adjective sellainen ('such') in
(84) does namely not agree with the (seemingly) partitive singular noun *rahaa* ('money'), it is namely likely that the learner intended to use a nominative singular basic subject but realized a partitive-like noun form.

(83)  
Error example  
Miehen *elämää muuttui täydellisesti.*  
man-Gen.Sg  life-Part.Sg  change-Past.3Sg  completely-Adv  
Target-like  
Miehen elämä muuttui täydellisesti.  
man-Gen.Sg  life(Nom.Sg)  change-Past.3Sg  completely-Adv  
'The man's life changed completely.'

(84)  
Error example  
Sellainen *rahaa ei auta perhettä.*  
such(Nom.Sg)  money-Part.Sg  help-Neg.3Sg  family-Part.Sg  
Target-like  
Sellainen raha ei auta perhettä.  
such(Nom.Sg)  money(Nom.Sg)  help-Neg.3Sg  family-Part.Sg  
'Such money does not help the family.'

The error cases observed from the Estonian learner corpus in which a partitive singular indefinite pronoun was used as a basic subject were mainly found to concern the indefinite pronoun *jokin* ('something'; part sg *jotain* or *jotakin*). As also reflected in the error examples (85) and (86), the partitive singular pronoun *jotakin* was generally used as the subject of basic intransitive sentences. When comparing the Finnish target-like sentences to their Estonian equivalents, it however becomes evident that the errors could probably be attributed to L1-L2 differences. In both (85) and (86), it would namely be gramatically correct to use the partitive singular indefinite pronoun *midagi* as the subject of the Estonian sentences, while the nominative singular indefinite pronoun *jokin* would be the only right choice in the Finnish sentences. Moreover, example (86) provides additional evidence suggesting that the partitive singular form of the indefinite pronoun was used due to influence of Estonian morphosyntax in that the produced
sentences exactly parallel the Estonian morpho-syntax. In addition to the partitive subject, a nominative rather than partitive predicative was namely used (*kiinnostava vs. huvitav in Estonian) as well as a translatative rather than an essive complement (*yllätykseksi vs. üllatuseks in Estonian).

(85) C1 component of the Estonian learner corpus
Error example *Jotakin ei suju niin hyvin kuin pitäisi.
    something-Part go-Neg.3Sg as well-Adv as should-Cond.3Sg
Target-like Jokin ei suju niin hyvin kuin pitäisi.
    something(Nom) go-Neg.3Sg as well-Adv as should-Cond.3Sg
Estonian equiv. Miski ~ Midagi ei suju nii hästi kui peaks.
    something(Nom) ~ -Part go-Neg as well-Adv as should-Cond.3Sg
    'Something does not go as well as it should go.'

(86) B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus
Error example Luulen, että *jotakin pysyy *yllätykseksi.
    think-1Sg that something-Part remain-3Sg secret-Transl.Sg
Target-like Luulen, että jokin pysyy yllätyksenä.
    think-1Sg that something(Nom) remain-3Sg secret-Ess.Sg
Estonian equiv. Arvan et midagi jääb üllatuseks.
    think-1Sg that something-Part remain-3Sg secret-Transl.Sg
    'I think that something remains a secret.'

Overuse of partitive plural as the case of the basic subject

In addition to the partitive subject overuse errors in which partitive singular was used as the case of the basic subject, the German and Dutch learner corpora also contained many overuse errors in which partitive plural was used as the case of
the basic subject. Such replacement of nominative plural by partitive plural also indicates that the German and Dutch learners are not yet sufficiently aware of the fact that the subject case alternation does merely apply to existential and not to basic subjects. Yet, the learners often seem to assume that the notions of divisibility and quantitative unboundedness always affect the case of the subject. Moreover, once they become aware of the existence of partitive subjects, they sometimes even seem to use partitive plural to merely express the plurality of the subject. The incorrect use of partitive plural as the case of the basic subject is illustrated in (87)-(89). Because the subject in (87) refers to a known and therefore bounded group of students, (87) serves as a clear example of a basic subject that merely seems to bear partitive plural because of the plurality of the subject. The learner might probably have considered partitive plural as more plural-like than nominative plural or may not have been aware of the fact that the plural basic subject should be assigned nominative plural.

(87) \textit{B1 component of the German learner corpus}

\textbf{Error example} \qquad *\textit{Henkilöitä olivat opiskelijoita.}

\textit{individual-Part.Pl be-Past.3Pl student-Part.Pl}

\textbf{Target-like} \qquad \textit{Henkilöt olivat opiskelijoita.}

\textit{individual-Nom.Pl be-Past.3Pl student-Part.Pl}

'\textit{The people were students.}'

Partitive overuse errors as in (88) were also frequently represented in the German and Dutch learner corpora. In such cases, the learners seem to have assumed that partitive plural should be assigned because the subject denotes an unbounded set of entities. While this holds true in the case of an existential sentence, the notion of quantitative unboundedness does nonetheless not affect the case of the basic subject. The principles for existential subject case-marking thus seem to have been overgeneralized to the basic sentence. The presence versus absence of an article system (unlike the German and Dutch language, Finnish lacks articles) may also have had its role in this. It is namely likely that the German and Dutch learners erroneously assumed that partitive plural should be assigned to plural subjects that are not preceded by an article. In other words, they seem to be inclined to straightforwardly assume that the lack of an article in the L1 implies

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that a subject is unbounded in Finnish. In Dutch, the noun *mensen* ('people') would for example not be accompanied by the definite article *de* ('the'; cf. (88)).

(88) \[ B1\text{ component of the Dutch learner corpus}\]

Error example  
Sitten *ihmisiä* luulevat, että osaan suomea.
then person-Part.Pl think-3Pl that master-1Sg Finnish-Part.Sg

Target-like  
Sitten ihmiset luulevat, että osaan suomea.
then person-Nom.Pl think-3Pl that master-1Sg Finnish-Part.Sg

'Then people think that I master Finnish.'

(Dutch: 'Dan denken mensen dat ik het Fins beheers')

In a similar vein as error examples like (89) reflect the learners' lack of insight into the syntactic restrictions of partitive subjects in general, (89) shows that the same also holds true for subjects preceded by quantifiers. Since the quantifying adverb *paljon* ('many') can merely co-occur with partitive subjects, constructions like *paljon ihmisiä* may occur in existential but not in basic sentences. As a consequence of these syntactic restrictions, the adverb *paljon* alternates with the quantifying adjective *moni* ('many') in basic sentences. The quantifying adverb *paljon* is nevertheless so common in Finnish that particularly beginning learners may often not realize themselves that *paljon ihmisiä* ('many people') cannot be used as a basic subject, but that *monet ihmiset* ('many people') should be used instead.

(89) \[ B1\text{ component of the German learner corpus}\]

Error example  
*Paljon ihmisia eivät tiedä sitä.
many-Adv person-Part.Pl know-Neg.3Pl that.Part.Sg

Target-like  
Monet ihmiset eivät tiedä sitä.
many-Nom.Pl person-Nom.Pl know-Neg.3Pl that-Part.Sg

'Many people don't know that.'
Overuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject

Partitive subject overuse errors in which partitive singular was incorrectly used as the case of the existential subject were observed from all learner corpora. In all of these cases, nominative singular was required because the sentences were affirmative and the existential subject denoted a bounded entity. Also in the error examples below ((90)-(94)), the existential subjects are singular count nouns that occur in affirmative sentence contexts. The replacement of nominative singular by partitive singular existential subjects cannot be given an explanation in terms of overgeneralization of prior knowledge of the L1 or L2. Errors of this type might therefore probably be nothing more than occasional slips of the pen emerging during the creative writing process. Alternatively, the error examples (90) and (91) also seem to suggest the possibility that some German and Dutch learners have interpreted the notion of definiteness in such a way that a subject preceded by an indefinite article in their L1 ((90) eine traurige Prinzessin 'an unhappy princess'; (91) een eigen taal 'an own language') corresponded to an indefinite (and thus partitive singular) existential subject in Finnish. Accordingly, they would then assume that a subject preceded by a definite article in their L1 would correspond to a definite (and thus nominative singular) existential subject in Finnish. Although this is an essentially different interpretation of definiteness than actually employed in Finnish, the German and Dutch learners' lack of relevant L1 knowledge could in combination with limited L2 knowledge nevertheless possibly have led to such erroneous learner-based assumptions.

(90)  B1 component of the German learner corpus

Error example  Olipa kerran *surullista prinsessaa.

be-3Sg.Particle time-Gen.Sg sad-Part.Sg princess-Part.Sg

Target-like  Olipa kerran surullinen prinsessa.

be-3Sg.Partic time-Gen.Sg sad(Nom.Sg) princess(Nom.Sg)

'Once upon a time, there was an unhappy princess .'

(German: 'Es war einmal eine traurige Prinzessin.')
B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example

\[
\text{Saamelaisilla on *omaa kieltä.}
\]

Saami-Adess.Pl be-3Sg own-Part.Sg language-Part.Sg

Target-like

\[
\text{Saamelaisilla on oma kieli.}
\]

Saami-Adess.Pl be-3Sg own(Nom.Sg) language(Nom.Sg)

'The Sámi people have an own language'

(Dutch: 'De Sámi hebben een eigen taal.')

Taking into consideration that the principles concerning the case-marking of existential subjects denoting a bounded entity are the same in Estonian as in Finnish, it may come unexpected that the Estonian learner corpus also contained replacements of nominative singular by partitive singular existential subjects. As mentioned earlier, overuse of partitive singular as the case of the existential subject even appeared to be significantly more common in the A2 than in the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus. When considering the error examples (92)-(93), it becomes obvious that errors of this type do not necessarily have to remain unexplained. The partitive singular subject in (92) is obviously simply a mistake, as both Finnish and Estonian license a nominative singular existential subject. While (93) also requires a nominative singular existential subject in Finnish as well as in Estonian sentence, an alternative explanation for the form tuolia could be that the learner actually meant to realize the partitive plural form tuoleja ('some chairs') but produced a form that coincidentally happened to be identical to the partitive singular. Taking into consideration that most of these errors were made at the A2 level, this supports an explanation related to noun formation in general as well as the formation of the partitive plural in particular. In both Finnish and Estonian, the formation of the partitive plural is namely inherently complex, which as a consequence is generally not introduced to foreign language learners until the formation of all other case endings has been addressed first. It is hereby important to note that the formation of partitive plural forms does not necessarily have to be entirely comparable in Finnish and Estonian (cf. Remes, 2009).
Error example  
**Kirjoituspöydällä on *radiota.**  
writing desk-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  radio-Part.Sg  

Target-like  
**Kirjoituspöydällä on radio.**  
writing desk-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  radio(Nom.Sg)  

Estonian equiv.  
**Kirjutuslaual on raadio.**  
writing desk-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  radio(Nom.Sg)  
'There is a radio on the writing desk.'

Error example  
**Huoneessa on kirjoituspöytä ja *tuolia.**  
room-Iness.Sg  be-3Sg  desk(Nom.Sg) and chair-Part.Sg  

Target-like  
**Huoneessa on kirjoituspöytä ja tuoli ~ tuoleja.**  
room-Iness.Sg  be-3Sg  desk(Nom.Sg) and chair(Nom.Sg)~ -Part.Pl  

Estonian equiv.  
**Toas on kirjutuslaud ja tool ~ toole.**  
room-Iness.Sg  be-3Sg  desk(Nom.Sg) and chair(Nom.Sg)~ -Part.Pl  
'In the room there is a writing desk and a chair ~ some chairs.'

While errors in which partitive singular was incorrectly used as the case of the existential subject were already marginally represented in the Estonian learner corpus, substitutions of nominative plural existential subjects by partitive plural existential subjects were even completely absent from the Estonian learner corpus. In contrast, 23% of the erroneous partitive existential subjects in the German learner corpus, and 33% of the erroneous partitive existential subjects in the Dutch learner corpus were replacements of nominative plural by partitive plural. Sentence (94a) provides an example of a partitive subject overuse error in which partitive plural was incorrectly used as the case of the existential subject. The existential subject in this error example denotes a bounded set of entities on
the basis of which nominative plural should have been assigned⁴. When comparing the Finnish target-like sentence to (94b), it becomes evident that the Estonian equivalent sentence would be morphosyntactically identical to the Finnish sentence. With respect to the Estonian learner corpus, the complete lack of errors in which partitive plural was used as the case of the existential subject could therefore be interpreted as positive influence of L1 morphosyntax, because nominative plural is in both Finnish and Estonian the case of plural existential subjects denoting a bounded set of entities. Because of this one-to-one correspondence between Finnish and Estonian, even relying on L1 knowledge would namely lead Estonian learners to choose nominative plural in this respect. In contrast, German and Dutch learners do not have relevant L1 knowledge at their disposal that would prevent them from occasionally making partitive subject overuse errors as illustrated in (94a). In addition, the German and Dutch learners were possibly inclined to interpret subjects as in (94a) as denoting unbounded sets of entities because the lack of a definite article in their L1 (e.g. ‘old clothes’ instead of ‘the old clothes’) would motivate them to formulate such an assumption.

(94a) B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example Hänellä on *vanhoja vaatteita päällä.
s/he-Adess.Sg be-3Sg old-Part.Pl clothes-Part.Pl on-Adess.Sg

Target-like Hänellä on vanhat vaatteet päällä.
s/he-Adess.Sg be-3Sg old-Nom.Pl clothes-Nom.Pl on-Adess.Sg

‘She/he is dressed in old clothing.’
(Dutch: Zij/hij heeft oude kleren aan)

⁴ Based on the error tagging and analysis principles (cf. 4.4/4.5.2: no single partitive over- or underuse error was classified as such without taking its context into account) error example (94) indicates that in certain cases, it is a little unfortunate that the error examples were chosen to be presented as decontextualized sentences. Although the partitive case-marking in (94) was grammatically incorrect in its particular context, it could have been grammatically correct in others. Yet, one should borne in mind that similar cases as (94) might occasionally be among the error examples, be it particularly among the existential sentences (cf. e.g. sentence (103), for which the nominative e-subject kirjat could have been licensed in specific contexts).
Tal on vaid vanad riided seljas.

he-Adess.Sg be-3Sg old-Nom.Pl clothes-Nom.Pl back-Iness.Sg

‘She/he is dressed in old clothing.’

Underuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject

Polarity

Analyzing the relationship between polarity and the occurrence of partitive underuse errors, it was revealed that all learner corpora were characterized by significantly lower partitive subject underuse error rates in negated than in affirmative sentence contexts, a difference that was stronger within the Estonian learner corpus than within the remaining learner corpora. Considering the separate proficiency components of each learner corpus, the differences between the underuse error rates in negated and affirmative sentence contexts merely turned out to be significant within the B1 components of the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpora. Unlike the remaining learner corpora, the underuse error rates in negated and affirmative sentence contexts calculated for the Estonian learner corpus however seem to rapidly draw nearer when proceeding from B1 to B2 (and onwards to C1). When comparing the learner corpora, the underuse of the partitive in negated sentences appeared to be significantly more common in the German and the Dutch learner corpora than in the Estonian learner corpus. In addition, the Estonian learner corpus showed a significant decrease with respect to the occurrence of partitive subject underuse errors in negated sentences when proceeding from A2 to B1.

All of these findings are particularly interesting when considering them in the light of the differences concerning the case-marking of existential subjects in affirmative and negated sentences outlined in 2.3.4. Briefly recalling these, the Finnish existential subject alternates between nominative and partitive in affirmative existential sentences (depending on the quantitative boundedness of the subject) but always assigns partitive in the case of negative polarity. Consequently, the principles for existential subject case-marking could be considered less complex for negated than for affirmative sentence contexts. Because the quantitative boundedness of the existential subject does not have to be taken into account in negated sentence contexts, there is thus only one decisive factor, for which a straightforward rule exists. Moreover, there is a one-to-one
correspondence between Finnish and Estonian with respect to the case-marking of existential subjects in negated sentences, but not with respect to affirmative sentence contexts. In Estonian, the existential subject namely also takes partitive in negated contexts, but Finnish lacks the Estonian affirmative existential sentence type involving a nominative plural existential subject preceded by a third person plural predicate (cf. 2.4.2).

It is thus exactly in accordance with the intralingual contrasts concerning the case-marking of existential subjects in negated and affirmative sentences that all learner corpora were found to be characterized by lower partitive underuse error rates in negated than in affirmative sentence contexts. Although this seems to indicate that polarity represents to all groups of learners a more opaque factor in determining the case of the existential subject than quantitative boundedness, the finding that the Estonian learners still produced significantly fewer partitive subject underuse errors in negated sentence contexts than their German and Dutch peers, may in turn be motivated on the basis of the fact that existential subjects take partitive case in both Finnish and Estonian. This one-to-one L1-L2 correspondence clearly provides the Estonian learners with very much of an advantage over their German and Dutch peers. However, as can be inferred from the rapid decrease between the underuse error rates in negated and affirmative contexts across the successive proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus, it is furthermore obviously the overall similarity between the Finnish and Estonian subject case alternation that facilitates the Estonian learners’ use of partitive subjects.

Confusion of sentence types as a trigger of underuse errors

As discussed in 6.3.2 and 6.3.4, all learner corpora were characterized by relatively high partitive subject underuse error rates that nevertheless decreased with increasing L2 proficiency. As for the underuse of partitive singular as the case of the existential subject, the Estonian learner corpus as a whole showed significantly lower error rates than the remaining learner corpora. These differences were however not strongly significant, which was also evidenced by the finding that a slightly significant difference between the Estonian and the German learner corpus was the only one remaining after narrowing down to the A2-B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus. This difference was particularly prominent at the B1 level. The Estonian learner corpus was the only one that showed a significant decrease in the partitive singular underuse error rate. This
significant difference was found to exist between the levels A2 and B1. Furthermore, the Estonian, German and Dutch learner corpora did not significantly differ with respect to the underuse of partitive plural as the case of the existential subject. Although all learner corpora showed a steadily decreasing partitive plural underuse error rate with increasing L2 proficiency, significant differences between successive proficiency components were merely found to exist between the B1 and B2 components of the German learner corpus.

On the whole, all learner corpora thus seem to show fairly similar partitive underuse error patterns. However, it definitely needs to be addressed whether these similar underuse error patterns observed from the different learner corpora were generally motivated by a common underlying source or whether the similarity could merely be attributed to a coincidental overlap.

To start with, confusion between sentence types seems to have played an important role in the emergence of partitive subject underuse errors. Inspection of the underuse errors namely revealed that learners often do not seem to be sufficiently aware of the morphosyntactic and semantic characteristics of certain sentence types. Not recognizing existential sentences or existential subjects as such might subsequently have triggered the occurrence of partitive subject underuse errors. This implies that such partitive subject underuse errors represent much more than incorrect case-marking of the subject alone.

As illustrated in (95)-(97), learners particularly exhibited difficulties in distinguishing between existential sentences and basic non-existential intransitive sentences. The confusion between existential sentences and basic non-existential intransitive sentences is fairly understandable in view of the seeming similarity between the sentence types. Existential sentences nevertheless differ both morphosyntactically and semantically from basic intransitive sentences, particularly because of the contrast between the existential and the basic non-alternating subject. Considering (95)-(97) from both a morphosyntactic and a semantic point of view, the error examples are situated at different points along the continuum in between the prototypical existential sentence and the basic intransitive sentence. From a morphosyntactic point of view, error example (95) shares all features with the basic intransitive sentence: The nominative plural subject *suomalaiset* ('Finns') agrees with the third person plural predicate *asuvat* 'they live' and the SVO word order equals the prototypical word order of a basic intransitive sentence. When considering the sentence from a semantic point of view, the meaning intended by the learner does however not seem to be accordingly expressed. As the nominative plural subject *suomalaiset* denotes a
bounded set of entities, the sentence namely implies that the entire Finnish population lives in Sweden. If the sentence would instead have had the morphosyntactic structure of an existential sentence (i.e. a third person singular predicate followed by a partitive plural existential subject), the partitive e-subject would instead have denoted an unbounded set of entities and the sentence would have expressed its intended meaning that there are groups of Finns living in Sweden.

(95) B2 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example Tiesin, että suomalaiset asuvat Ruotsissa.

know-Past.1Sg that Finn-Nom.Pl live-3Pl Sweden-Iness.Sg

'I already knew that the Finns live in Sweden.'

Target-like Tiesin, että Ruotsissa asuu suomalaisia.

know-Past.1Sg that Sweden-Iness.Sg live-3Sg Finn-Part.Pl

'I knew that there are Finns living in Sweden.'

Apart from the prototypical word order of the existential sentence, error example (96) has all other morphosyntactic features in common with the basic intransitive sentence: The nominative plural subject jotkut suomalaiset ('some Finns') agrees with the third person plural predicate asuvat ('they live'). Like (95), the subject was nevertheless meant to express an unbounded rather than a bounded set of entities, which can be inferred from the fact that the learner tried to explicitly express the quantitative boundedness of the subject by adding the indefinite adjective jotkut ('some') to the sentence. Although this is definitely a creative solution, the correct way of expressing the quantitatively unbounded nature of the subject would naturally be by using a partitive existential subject. The need to explicitly express the quantitatively unbounded nature of the subject would automatically vanish by using a partitive plural existential subject (in which this unboundedness has already been incorporated). Error example (96) shows that the learner was aware of the quantitative unboundedness of the subject but not of the target-like way to express this. As a consequence, the sentence structure lies somewhere in between the structure of an existential sentence and a basic intransitive structure.
In a similar vein, error example (97) shows both characteristics of the existential and basic intransitive sentence, although (97) has more in common with the existential sentence than (96). The verb in error example (97) is namely a third person singular predicate that does not show agreement with the postverbal subject, so that the mere difference from the target-like existential sentence resides in the use of nominative instead of partitive plural as the case of the subject. The subject in (97) was obviously also meant to denote an unbounded subject.

(96) B2 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example  Myös Karjalassa asuvat jotkut suomalaiset.
also Karelia-Iness.Sg live-3Pl some-Nom.Pl Finn-Nom.Pl

Target-like  Myös Karjalassa asuu suomalaisia.
also Karelia-Iness.Sg live-3Sg Finn-Part.Pl

'There are also Finns living in Karelia.'

(97) B2 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example  Venäjällä asuu myös *suomalaiset.
Russia-Adess.Sg live-3Sg Finn-Nom.Pl

Target-like  Venäjällä asuu myös suomalaisia.
Russia-Adess.Sg live-3Sg Finn-Part.Pl

'There are also Finns living in Russia.'

Although many of the partitive subject underuse errors contained in the learner corpora occurred in existential sentences such as (96)-(97), the confusion with basic intransitive sentences stretches out much further than this. The learner corpora basically reflect difficulties in recognizing all kinds of sentences in which partitive subjects may occur. By contrasting error examples with target-like subtypes of existential sentences, indefinite intransitive sentences and quantifying sentences ((98a)-(102a)) as well as with similar basic intransitive sentences ((98b)-(102b)), it is illustrated that the partitive subject underuse errors in these sentences very well may be attributed to the seemingly similarities with basic
intransitive sentences. Word order hereby stands out as an important factor contributing to this confusion.

Error example (98a) does not seem to be an existential sentence at first sight. The erroneous sentence namely looks remarkably similar to the basic intransitive sentence in (98b), particularly because of its parallel word order. Probably as a consequence of this, the case of the existential subject in (98a) has not been changed into partitive singular as should have been done in accordance with the negative polarity of the existential sentence. The basic subject in comparison example (98b) is namely not affected by the negative polarity of the sentence and remains in nominative singular.

(98a) B1 component of the German learner corpus

Error example *Kukaan ei ole enää täällä.

nobody(Nom.Sg) be-Neg.3Sg anymore here

Target-like Täällä ei ole enää ketään.
(existential) here be-Neg.3Sg anymore nobody-Part.Sg

'There is nobody here anymore.'

(98b) Comparison example

(basic intrans.) Kukaan ei ole täällä ikuisesti.

nobody(Nom.Sg) be-Neg.3Sg here forever

'Nobody is here forever.'

Considering error example (99a) from a semantic point of view, it is fairly obvious that the learner should have produced an indefinite intransitive sentence containing a partitive plural existential subject. From a morphosyntactic point of view, error example (99a) however resembles the structure of a basic intransitive sentence in that the nominative plural subject ihmiset ('people') agrees with the third person plural predicate kuolvat 'they die' (cf. (99b)). Because of its reversed word order, the sentence nonetheless also bears resemblance to the indefinite intransitive sentence. Error example ((99a)) thus clearly reflects confusion between these two sentence types.
(99a)

_ERROR example       (B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus)_

*Kuolevat myös ihmiset, jotka eivät ole tehneet mitään väärin.

die-3Pl also person-Nom.Pl that-Nom.Pl do-Neg.Past.3Pl nothing-Part.Sg wrong

_Target-like sentence   (indefinite intransitive sentence)_

Kuolee myös ihmisät, jotka eivät ole tehneet mitäään vääriin.

die-3Sg also person-Part.Pl that-Nom.Pl do-Neg.Past.3Pl nothing-Part.Sg wrong

'There also die people that have not done anything wrong.'

(99b)

_Comparison example    (basic intransitive sentence)_

Ihmiset kuolevat, vaikka he eivät oleet syyllisiä.

person-Nom.Pl die-Past.3Pl although they(Nom) be-Neg.Past.3Pl guilty-Part.Pl

'The people died, although they were not guilty.'

Similarly, the intended meaning of error example (100a) and (101a) should have been conveyed by means of an event sentence. Because the event sentence is a subtype of the existential sentence, the subjects should thus have been turned into partitive existential subjects in accordance with the negative polarity of the sentence. Nevertheless, the difference between these and seemingly similar basic intransitive sentences such as (100b) and (101b) has possibly remained completely unnoticed to them, so that they simply have assumed (100a) and (101a) to be basic intransitive sentences and the subjects to be basic non-alternating subjects. Error example (101a) even provides additional evidence for this assumption in that the coordinated nominative singular subjects Ruotsi ja Venäjä ('Sweden and Russia') agree with the third person plural negative predicate ei ole ('they are not') instead of co-occurring with the incongruent third person singular predicate ei ole.
In a similar vein, confusion between quantifying sentences and basic intransitive sentences was reflected in the learner corpora. This confusion is illustrated in error example (102a) Although the quantifying adverbs tarpeeksi ('enough') and riittävästi ('sufficiently') indicate that that the sentences in (102a) are quantifying sentences, this has apparently remained unnoticed to the learners. Probably
because the quantifying sentence is merely a marginal construction in Finnish (cf. Hakulinen & Karlsson, 1979: 97–99), the learners might have not even been aware of the fact that the subject of the quantifying sentence always bears partitive case. Yet, the conspicuous similarity to basic intransitive sentences such as (102b) may possibly have made them to use nominative singular instead of partitive singular as the case of the subject.

(102a)

*Error example*

**B1 component of the German LC**

*Raha ei ole tarpeeksi.*

money(Nom.Sg) be-Neg.3Sg enough  

**B1 component of the Dutch LC**

*Raha oli riittävästi.*

money(Nom.Sg) be-Past.3Sg enough

**Target-like sentence**

*Rahaa ei ole tarpeeksi.*

money-Part.Sg be-Neg.3Sg enough 

(Rahaa oli riittävästi.

money-Part.Sg be-Past.3Sg enough

'There isn’t money enough.'  

'There was money enough.'

(102b)

*Comparison example -- basic intransitive sentence*

*Raha ei ole kaikki.*

money(Nom.Sg) be-Neg.Past.3Sg everything(Nom)

'Money is not everything.'

**Underuse of partitive plural as the case of the existential subject**

In the preceding, it was discussed that the underuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject was not limited to existential sentences but also pertained to event sentences, indefinite intransitive sentences and quantifying sentences. Nevertheless, most partitive plural underuse errors observed from the learner corpora were prototypical existential sentences of the type exemplified in (103). In this example, the postverbal existential subject bears nominative plural and
does not agree with the (seemingly) third person singular predicate. Although nominative plural should indeed have been assigned in cases where the existential subject denoted a bounded set of entities, this context clearly points to an unbounded set of entities ("some books") on the basis of which a partitive plural existential subject would have been licensed.

Comparing Finnish and Estonian, example (103) also illustrates that the Estonian language distinguishes between an existential sentence type in which the nominative plural existential subject does show agreement with the predicate (Estonian equivalent 1) and an existential sentence type which is morphosyntactically identical to the Finnish existential sentence (Estonian equivalent 2). When taking into account that the verb *olla* ('to be') has identical third person singular and third person plural forms in Estonian (i.e. *on*), the erroneous structure could thus basically be morphosyntactically similar to the Estonian equivalent 1, assuming that the Estonian third person plural form *on* had been transferred to the Finnish sentence. As it can however not be proven true or false whether a third person plural predicate was indeed meant to be used, there is obviously a lack of evidence to interpret errors as exemplified in (103) as instances of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax when observed from the Estonian learner corpus.

In addition, the Estonian learner corpus contained partitive plural underuse errors as exemplified in (104). The difference between (103) and (104) resides in that the nominative plural existential subject in (104) is preceded by the predicate *ovat* (i.e. the third person plural form of the Finnish verb *olla* 'to be'). Unlike its Estonian equivalent, the Finnish verb *olla* namely does have distinct third person singular and third person plural forms (*on* versus *ovat*). The combination of the nominative plural existential subject with an unambiguous third person plural predicate makes the morphosyntactic similarity between the erroneous structure and its Estonian equivalent more evident. Notwithstanding this, errors as (104) were also observed from the remaining learner corpora, so that additional evidence suggesting the occurrence of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax still had to be provided.

(103) *A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus*

*Error example*  
Pöydällä on *kirjat.*

*table-Adess.Sg be-3Sg (~ 3Pl) book-Nom.Pl*
Estonian equiv1  **Laul on raamatud.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Pl  book-Nom.Pl

Estonian equiv2  **Laul on raamatuid.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  book-Part.Pl

Target-like  **Pöydällä on kirjoja.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  book-Part.Pl

'There are books on the table.'

(104)  *B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus*  
**Error example**  **Pöydällä ovat *kirjat.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Pl  book-Nom.Pl

Estonian equiv.  **Laul on raamatud.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Pl  book-Nom.Pl

Target-like  **Pöydällä on kirjoja.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  book-Part.Pl

'There are books on the table.'

(105)  *B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus*  
**Error example**  **Pöydän päällä ovat *kirjat.**  
  table-Gen.Sg  on-Postp  be-3Pl  book-Nom.Pl

Estonian equiv.  **Laual on raamatud.**  
  table-Gen.Sg  on-Postp  be-3Pl  book-Nom.Pl

Target-like  **Pöydällä on kirjoja.**  
  table-Adess.Sg  be-3Sg  book-Part.Pl

'There are books on the table.'
Such additional evidence was found from error examples like (105), in which not only the subject and the predicate showed influence of Estonian but also the locative complement clearly reflects the Estonian morphosyntactic structure. Although the postpositional construction *pöydän päällä* ('on the table') is grammatically correct in Finnish, it is in fact only marginally used in contrast to its Estonian equivalent locative construction *laua peal* which is used nearly interchangeably with its adessive variant laual ('on the table') ⁵.

In addition to the error examples (104)-(105), more explicit evidence suggesting the transfer of the third person plural form of the Estonian verb *olla* ('to be') was also occasionally found. A clear instance of this kind of transfer is manifested in (106). The first part of this sentence is negated and the second affirmative. The negated part of the error example contains a partitive plural existential subject, correctly realized based on the negative polarity of the sentence. In the affirmative part of the sentence, the partitive plural existential subject has been replaced by a nominative plural existential subject. Taking into account that the error example is morphosyntactically completely similar to the Estonian structure, it has probably been influenced by this Estonian morphosyntactic pattern. As a consequence, the predicate *on* was likely meant to be a third person plural form. Moreover, the L1-L2 contrast between the case-marking of existential subjects in negated and affirmative sentence contexts supports the preceding. Because the partitive is in both Finnish and Estonian assigned in the case of negative polarity, nominative plural existential subjects can only occur in affirmative Estonian sentences. There are thus some differences between Finnish and Estonian with respect to the case-marking of existential subjects in affirmative sentence contexts. In line with this, negative influence of L1 morphosyntax is reflected only in the affirmative part of error example (106). As for its negated part, even the use of the Estonian morphosyntactic pattern would namely result in a target-like structure containing a partitive plural subject.

⁵ In Finnish, the postpositional locative construction *jonkin päällä* ('on something') is basically used to complement the adessive locative construction. Strictly speaking, the locative postposition *päällä* should therefore only be used in those locative constructions that express contact with the surface of concrete objects on which normally nothing is placed (e.g. *Hanskat olivat auton päällä*. 'The gloves were on (top of) the car.') (ISK, 2004: § 689). In contrast, the Estonian adessive and postpositional locative constructions *laual* and *laua peal* ('on the table') are generally taken to be semantic alternatives (Klavan, 2012: 56–57) of which at least in written Estonian, the former is more likely to be used than the latter (cf. Klavan, 2012: 113).
(106)

Error example  (B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus)

Meillä ei ole isoja ongelmia, on vain *pienet.

we-Adess be-Neg.3Sg big-Part.Pl problem-Part.Pl be-3Sg only small-Nom.Pl

Target-like sentence

Meillä ei ole isoja ongelmia, on vain pieniä.

we-Adess be-Neg.3Sg big-Part.Pl problem-Part.Pl be-3Sg only small-Part.Pl

Estonian equivalent sentence

Meil ei ole suuri probleeme, on vaid väikesed.

we-Adess be-Neg.3Sg big-Part.Pl problem-Part.Pl be-3Pl only small-Nom.Pl

'We do not have big problems, (we) only (have) small ones.'

On the basis of the evidence presented in the preceding, it is well-motivated to assume that those partitive plural underuse errors contained in the Estonian learner corpus that involve a nominative plural e-subject and a congruent third person plural predicate *ovat* are due to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. This is not to say that none of the partitive plural underuse errors involving a nominative plural e-subject and the predicate *on* could be due to negative influence of Estonian morphosyntax. It can however not be proven without doubt whether (and which) of these underuse errors are indeed due to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. As a matter of fact, the presence of the predicate *on* obscures potential influence of Estonian morphosyntax in these cases. Because of the overlap between the Finnish third person singular and the Estonian third person plural forms of the verb *olla* (‘to be’), the predicate *on* could in these cases either reflect the correct Finnish form (i.e. the third person singular form of the Finnish verb *olla*) or transfer of the Estonian third person plural form *on* to the Finnish sentence.

Yet, as it cannot be sufficiently underpinned whether or not these partitive plural underuse errors reflect the exact structure of Estonian existential sentences containing a nominative plural e-subject and a congruent third person plural copula predicate, it is only justified to acknowledge them as potentially due to negative influence of Estonian morphosyntax. On the other hand, the partitive plural underuse errors involving a nominative plural e-subject and a congruent
third person plural predicate *ovat* can be classified as certainly due to negative influence of Estonian morphosyntax. Taking this classification into account, 27% (25/91) of the total number of partitive plural underuse errors extracted from the Estonian learner corpus could with certainty be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. These errors were merely found at the lower proficiency levels: The A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus contained 36% of the errors, the B1 component 44%, and the B2 component the remaining 20% of the underuse errors. In addition to this, figure 28 shows the partitive plural underuse error rate as subdivided into a part co-occurring with the third person plural predicate *ovat* and a part co-occurring with the (seemingly) third person singular predicate *on*.

![Figure 28. The Estonian learners’ replacement of partitive plural by (in)congruent nominative plural e-subjects.](image)

Statistical analyses revealed that, just as there were no significant differences between the successive proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus with respect to the steadily decreasing partitive plural underuse error rate as a whole (confer back to figure 26), significant differences between successive proficiency components were not found to exist when restricting the analyses to the replacements of partitive plural by nominative plural co-occurring with *ovat*. Although not significantly decreasing with increasing L2 proficiency, figure 28 illustrates that there is at least a substantial decrease in the partitive plural underuse error rate observed from the Estonian learner corpus.
Underuse of partitive singular as the case of the e- subject

In spite of the one-to-one correspondence between Finnish and Estonian with respect to the case-marking of existential subjects in negated sentence contexts, the underuse of partitive singular as the case of the existential subject was not found to be completely absent from the negated sentence contexts contained in the Estonian learner corpus. Nonetheless, there generally does not seem to be a causal relation between the occurrence of these underuse errors and the negative polarity of the sentence. In other words, the partitive subject underuse errors merely happened to occur in negated sentences but they were in fact caused by something else. Considering ((107)-(109)), it becomes fairly obvious that the overlap between Finnish nominative singular forms and Estonian partitive forms has likely played a significant role in this.

(107) B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus
Error example: Valitettavasti minulla ei ole *isä.
unfortunately I-Adess.Sg be-Neg.3Sg father (Nom.Sg)
Target-like: Valitettavasti minulla ei ole isää.
unfortunately I-Adess.Sg be-Neg.3Sg father-Part.Sg
Estonian equiv.: Kahjuks mul ei ole isa.
unfortunately I-Adess.Sg be-Neg father-Part.Sg

'Unfortunately I do not have a father.'

(108) A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus
Error example: Hänellä ei ole vielä *lapsi.
s/he-Adess be-3Sg still child(Nom.Sg)
Target-like: Hänellä ei ole vielä lapsia.
s/he-Adess be-3Sg still child-Part.Pl
Estonian equiv.  

Tal ei ole veel lapsi.

s/he-Adess  be-3Sg still  child-Part.Pl

'She/he does not have children yet.'

(109)  

B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example  

Jos *aika jää, luen paljon.

if  time(Nom.Sg) remain-3Sg read-1Sg much-Adv

Target-like  

Jos aikaa jää, luen paljon.

if  time-Part.Sg  remain-3Sg read-1Sg much-Adv

Estonian equiv.  

Kui aega jääb, loen palju.

if  time-Part.Sg  remain-3Sg read-1Sg much-Adv

'If there is time left, I read a lot.'

As shown in (107), the nominative singular of the Finnish noun isä ('father') and the partitive singular of its Estonian equivalent isa are namely nearly identical, while the Finnish partitive singular form isäät ends in a long vowel. Yet, example (108) illustrates the overlap between the nominative singular of the Finnish noun lapsi ('child') and the partitive plural of its Estonian equivalent laps. In (109), it is furthermore exemplified that the nominative singular of the Finnish noun aika ('time') and the partitive singular of its Estonian equivalent aeg are similar (aika vs. aega), while the Finnish partitive singular form aikaa ends in a long vowel. Taking this into account, the erroneous subjects were likely intended as partitive subjects but because of the coincidental overlap between Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive forms they turned out to be seemingly nominative singular subjects. Yet, this is to be interpreted as similar negative influence of L1 morphology as the negative influence of L1 morphology that led to the replacement of partitive objects by seemingly nominative singular objects in the lower proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus (its A2 proficiency component in particular).

As for error examples such as ((107)-(109)), the Estonian partitive form could either have been directly transferred to the Finnish sentence (and slightly adapted to the Finnish orthographic and phonological principles) or the Finnish noun
could have been inflected according to the Estonian rules for nominal inflection. The phonological similarity between the Finnish and Estonian noun stems makes it nonetheless difficult (if not impossible) to disentangle these two possibilities. Notwithstanding this, the occurrence of negative influence of L1 morphology has found wide support in the coincidental overlap between Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive singular forms as well as in the error patterns exemplified in (107)-(109). On the basis of this, the substitutions of partitive singular that were certainly influenced by L1 morphology were interpreted as instances of negative influence of L1 morphology.

On the whole, it could for 43% (19/44) of the replacements of partitive singular by nominative singular contained in the Estonian learner corpus with certainty be determined that the erroneous subject forms were merely seemingly nominative singular forms, triggered by the coincidental overlap between Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive forms. A substantial proportion of the partitive singular underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus can thus be interpreted as instances of negative influence of L1 morphology. Importantly, these errors only occurred at the lower proficiency levels: 53% were produced at the A2 level, 26% at the B1 level and 21% at the B2 level.

With respect to the partitive singular underuse error rates, it was already revealed that partitive singular was in the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus significantly less frequently replaced by nominative singular than in its A2 component ($\chi^2 (1) = 8.38; p = .01$). Similarly, the partitive singular underuse errors attributed to negative influence of L1 morphology appeared to occur significantly less frequently in the B1 component than in the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.75; p = .01$). In figure 29, the partitive singular underuse ratio is shown as being subdivided into a part representing the instances of negative influence of L1 morphology and part representing the remaining partitive singular underuse errors.

Zooming in further, nearly 80% (15/19) of the partitive singular underuse errors caused by negative influence of L1 morphology were found to involve the seemingly nominative singular existential subject *aika* ('time'). When relating these instances of negative influence of L1 morphology to the number of contexts requiring the partitive singular existential subject *aikaa*, it was revealed that one out of four (15/60) of the Estonian learners' attempts to use the partitive singular form in question had resulted in a partitive subject underuse error. Yet, the high-frequent occurrence of contexts requiring the partitive singular existential subject *aikaa* provided the opportunity for negative influence of L1 morphology to occur,
while the phonological similarity between the Finnish nominative singular form *aika* and the Estonian partitive singular form *aega* served as a trigger for this L1 influence to actually occur. The seemingly nominative singular existential subject *aika* thus stood out because of the combination of these two factors (i.e. frequency and phonological similarity).

![Fig. 29. The Estonian learners’ (seeming) use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular e-subjects.](image)

Although the so far discussed examples imply that phonological similarity generally seems to trigger negative influence of L1 morphology, (110) illustrates that this does not necessarily have to be the case. In this error example, the partitive singular subject *siskoa* has been replaced by the (seemingly) nominative singular existential subject *sisko*, but the coordinated partitive singular subject *veljeä* has been correctly realized. In contrast to the assumption that phonological similarity may act as a trigger for negative influence of L1 morphology, the Finnish noun *sisko* ('sister') appears to have a phonologically different Estonian equivalent (*õde*) and the Finnish noun *veli* ('brother') a phonologically similar Estonian equivalent (*vend*). However, as the Estonian noun *õde* has identical nominative and partitive singular forms but *vend* distinct nominative and partitive singular forms (*vend* vs. *venda*), the absence versus presence of distinct
nominative and partitive singular forms for the Estonian words õde and vend might have led to the erroneous assumption that this also holds true in Finnish. It might sound rather far-fetched to propose that Estonian learners possibly draw such similarity relations on nominal inflection, but the peculiar verbal morphology of error example (110) might put it in another perspective. This peculiarity concerning verbal morphology is also manifest in error example (111).

(110) A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus
Error example *Minulla en ole sisko eikä veljeä.
I-Adess be-Neg.1Sg sister(Nom.Sg) nor brother-Part.Sg
Target-like Minulla ei ole siskoa eikä veljeä.
I-Adess be-Neg.3Sg sister-Part.Sg nor brother-Part.Sg
Estonian equiv. Mul ei ole õde ega venda.
I-Adess be-Neg sister-Part.Sg nor brother-Part.Sg
'I do not have a sister or a brother.'

(111) A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus
Error example *Meillä emme ole astianpesukone.
we-Adess be-Neg.1Pl dish washer(Nom.Sg)
Target-like Meillä ei ole astianpesukonetta.
we-Adess be-Neg.3Sg dish washer-Part.Sg
Estonian equiv. Meil ei ole nõudepesumasinat.
we-Adess be-Neg dish washer-Part.Sg
'We do not have a dish washer.'

Comparing the target-like Finnish sentences and Estonian equivalents in (110)-(111), it can be inferred that ei ole is in both Finnish and Estonian the predicate of negated existential sentences. In the erroneous sentences, the negation verb
nevertheless shows a relation to the adessive complement representing the thematic role of *possessor*. In (110), the first person singular negation verb *en ole* was probably chosen because of the first person singular adessive personal pronoun *minulla*, while the first person plural negation verb *emme ole* in (111) has been influenced by the first person plural adessive personal pronoun *meillä*. It might initially seem contradictory that such errors were observed from the Estonian learner corpus, but it is nothing more than the complexity of errors of this type that obscures its underlying logic.

The reasoning behind errors as (110)-(111) has to be sought in the slight differences between the Finnish and the Estonian verbal conjugation system. As a matter of fact, Finnish has a more elaborative verbal conjugation system than Estonian. This is particularly reflected in that the Estonian negation verb is not inflected for person or number. The Estonian present tense negated predicate is therefore *ei ole*, usually preceded by a personal pronoun (cf. Finnish *en / et / ei / emme / ette / eivät ole*). These L1-L2 differences in verbal conjugation could easily lead beginning Estonian learners of Finnish to erroneously assume that the Finnish negation verb has to be inflected in any case, without having sufficiently verified this. In other words, the erroneous negation verb forms seem to have emerged from the overgeneralization of the Finnish principles for verbal conjugation, in turn motivated by the general L1-L2 difference in verbal conjugation encountered by the learner. It is therefore very challenging (if not impossible) to disentangle the extent of intra- and interlingual influence in this case, because assumed intralingual similarities and interlingual differences both served as the driving force behind the erroneous negation predicate forms.

Identifying possible intra- and interlingual influence becomes even more challenging when considering error examples like (112) and (113), for which both seem to be manifest at different linguistic levels. Like in previous examples, the nominative-like existential subject *aika* in both (112) and (113) could have been influenced by the Estonian partitive singular form *aega*. Assuming that a partitive subject was indeed meant to be used, the resemblance to the Estonian equivalent sentences is in both cases fairly obvious. As for error example (112), the infinitive *syödä* (‘to eat’) could have been misspelled as *syötä*, because the /d/ is pronounced [t]-like in Estonian. In contrast to influence of Estonian, the incorrect agreement relation between the first person singular predicate *en* and the adessive pronoun *minulla* however suggest similar overgeneralization of Finnish negation verb morphology in the same way as illustrated in (110) and (111).
(112)

Error example  (A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus)

*Päivällä minulla en ole aika syöä.

day-Adess.Sg  I-Adess  be-Neg.1Sg  time(Nom.Sg)  eat-Inf1

Target-like sentence

Päivän aikana minulla ei ole aikaa syödä.

day-Gen.Sg  during-Postp  I-Adess  be-Neg.3Sg  time-Part.Sg  eat-Inf1

Estonian equivalent sentence

Päeval mul ei ole aega süüa.

day-Adess.Sg  I-Adess  be-Neg  time-Part.Sg  eat-Inf1

'During the day I do not have time to eat.'

As specifically for error example (113), the underlying structure completely parallels the Estonian but not the Finnish target-like structure. The Finnish verb *opiskella* (*to study*) should have been used instead of *oppia* (*to learn*). The latter verb is however phonologically similar to the Estonian verb *õppida*, which covers both the meanings *to study* and *to learn*. The illative singular rather than the translative singular form of the verbal substantive derived from the verb *oppia* should have been used. Moreover, the Estonian translative ending *-ks* was used instead of the Finnish translative ending *-ksi*. Similarly, the third infinitive illative form of the verb *nukkua* (*to sleep*) ends in the Estonian ending *-ma* instead of its Finnish equivalent *-maan.

(113)

Error example

*Oppimiseks kuluu niin paljon aika, että nukkuma pääsen myöhään.

learning-Trans.Sg  pass-3Sg  that  much time(Nom.Sg)  that  sleep-3Inf.Ill  get-1Sg  late

Target-like sentence

Opiskelemiseen kuluu niin paljon aikaa, että pääsen myöhään nukkumaan.

studying-Ill.Sg  pass-3Sg  that  much time-Part.Sg  that  get-1Sg  late  sleep-3Inf.Ill
Unlike the Estonian learner corpus, the German and Dutch learner corpora appeared to contain a specific type of partitive subject underuse errors in which not only nominative singular was instead of partitive singular used as the case of an existential subject but the third person singular predicate was also replaced by a predicate relating in person and number to the adessive complement. In (114), the first person singular predicate relates to minulla, the adessive form of the first person singular personal pronoun minä ('I'). In (115), the third person plural predicate relates to heillä, the adessive form of the third person plural personal pronoun he ('they'). Although the adessive pronoun is not functioning as the subject of the sentence, the learners apparently made an attempt to establish agreement between the adessive complement and the verb.

(114)

Error example  (B1 component of the German learner corpus)

*Minulla olen ongelmat ymmärtää mitä hän sanoo.

I-Adess be-1Sg problem-Nom.Pl understand-1Inf what-Part.Sg he(Nom) say-3Sg

Target-like sentence

Minulla on ongelmia ymmärtää mitä hän sanoo.

I-Adess be-3Sg problem-Part.Pl understand-1Inf what-Part.Sg he(Nom) say-3Sg

German equivalent sentence

Ich habe Probleme zu verstehen was er sagt.

I(Nom) have-1Sg problem-Acc.Pl to understand-Inf what-Acc.Sg he(Nom) say-3Sg

'I have problems understanding what he says.'

(115)  A2 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example  *Heillä olivat hauska.

they-Adess be-Past.3Pl nice(Nom.Sg)
**Target-like**  
Heillä oli hauskaa.  
they-Adess be-Past.3Sg nice-Part.Sg

**Dutch equiv.**  
Zij hadden plezier.  
they(Nom) have-Past3Pl fun

'They were having fun.'

This atypical and non-target like kind of agreement was possibly established because of the learners' attempt to draw a parallel to their L1, in which possession is expressed in a different way than in Finnish. Because of the existence of the habère construction (the verb 'to have') in German and Dutch, the Finnish structure minulla on ('I have'; Lit. 'to me is') corresponds to the German structure ich habe and its Dutch equivalent ik heb. The L2 adessive complement and the L1 subject thus share the same thematic role of possessor. Apparently, the learners also perceived a certain similarity between the L2 adessive complement and the L1 subject, which triggered them to transform the subject-verb agreement relation into an agreement relation between the adessive complement and the verb. In this respect, error examples such as (114) and (115) do not only seem to reflect influence of L1 morphosyntax but also a lack of familiarity with the morphosyntactic characteristics of the L2 possessive construction.

### 5.3.6 Conclusions and summary of the main findings

Both the German and Estonian learner corpora were found to contain significantly more partitive case-marked subjects and partitive subject-requiring contexts than the native Finnish reference corpus. In contrast, there were no significant differences between the Dutch learner corpus and the reference corpus. Although these findings initially suggested conspicuous similarities between the German and Estonian learners' use of partitive subjects, the error analyses indicated that this was certainly not the case. Importantly, the Estonian learner corpus was found to be characterized by significantly lower partitive subject over- and underuse error rates than the remaining learner corpora, and the Dutch learner corpus by significantly lower error rates than the German learner corpus. More specifically, the Estonian learner corpus even showed a virtual lack of partitive subject overuse errors from the B1 level onward as well as significantly lower over- than underuse error rates at the levels A2, B1 and B2. In contrast, the German learner
corpus was found to exhibit significantly higher over- than underuse error rates, indicating that the significant overrepresentation of partitive subjects in the German learner corpus was particularly due to overuse of the partitive as the case of the subject.

Detailed analyses on the overuse of the partitive as the case of the subject revealed that partitive subject overuse errors obviously occurred significantly more frequently in the remaining learner corpora than in the Estonian learner corpus, because the German and Dutch learners tended to use the partitive also as the case of the basic non-existent subject. Obviously because basic subjects can neither in Finnish nor in Estonian appear in partitive case, the Estonian learners did not show a similar tendency to overgeneralize the partitive to basic sentences. In line with this, the virtual lack of partitive subject overuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus was interpreted as positive influence of L1 morphosyntax.

Unlike the Estonian learner corpus, the German and Dutch learner corpus contained many error examples in which partitive singular was used as the case of the basic subject, in which partitive plural was used as the case of a basic plural subject denoting an unbounded set of entities or even as the case of a basic plural subject denoting a bounded set of entities. Yet, the German and Dutch learners' overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject seems to indicate that the learners are not sufficiently aware of the syntactic restrictions for the occurrence of partitive subjects.

In contrast to the partitive subject overuse errors, all learner corpora were found to contain rather many partitive subject underuse errors. The underuse error rates observed from the Estonian learner corpus were nevertheless significantly lower than those observed from the remaining learner corpora. On the basis of the case endings that were used to replace the partitive case, the partitive subject underuse errors were classified into three error categories: Substitutions of partitive singular by nominative singular, substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural and the remaining underuse errors. The latter category covered merely 4–5% of the underuse errors, implying that most underuse errors related to the nominative-partitive subject case alternation. However, detailed analyses on the error patterns revealed that there was often much more involved than simply the use of nominative instead of partitive as the case of the existential subject.

First, all learner corpora were found to contain underuse errors occurring in sentences clearly reflecting confusion between sentence types. The morphosyntactic structure of the basic non-existent intransitive sentence hereby
especially seemed to have acted as a trigger for partitive subject underuse errors to occur. Consequently, the underuse of the partitive as the case of the subject was often not the only indicator of confusion between basic intransitive sentences and existential sentence types. In fact, some of the error examples were on the basis of word order patterns and subject-verb agreement morphosyntactically even more similar to basic intransitive sentences than existential sentences. However, as the subjects were clearly meant to denote an unbounded entity or set of entities, there was often an obvious trade-off between meaning and morphosyntactic structure.

The use of nominative plural instead of partitive plural as the case of the existential subject appeared to be common in all learner corpora. Moreover, all learner corpora contained error examples in which not only the partitive plural subject was replaced by a nominative plural subject but also the third person singular predicate on was replaced by the third person plural predicate ovat (derived from the verb olla ('to be')). Detailed analyses were however conducted to verify whether the Estonian learners' substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural could be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax rather than to confusion with the morphosyntactic structure of the Finnish non-existent basic intransitive sentence. While Estonian namely has an existential sentence type that does not have its equivalent in Finnish and in which the nominative plural existential subject does agree with a third person plural predicate, the lack of a distinct third person singular and third person plural form of the Estonian verb olla made this potential influence of L1 morphosyntax difficult to determine with certainty. Nevertheless, one out of four of the total number of partitive plural underuse errors extracted from the Estonian learner corpus could with absolute certainty be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. Although these underuse errors only occurred in the lower proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus and substantially decreased with increasing L2 proficiency, statistical evidence suggesting an inverse relation between this negative influence of L1 morphosyntax and L2 proficiency was not found.

As for the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular, nearly half of these errors contained in the Estonian learner corpus were only found to be nominative singular-like forms, triggered by the coincidental overlap between Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive forms. The vast majority of these errors concerned the substitution of the Finnish partitive form aikaa by the nominative-like form aika. (cf. the Estonian partitive singular form aega). The significant decrease in underuse errors of this type as found between the A2 and
B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus provided evidence suggesting an inverse relation between negative influence of L1 morphology and L2 proficiency.

To conclude, the analyses revealed conspicuous differences between the use of partitive subjects in the learners of Finnish from a closely related L1 background (Estonian) and the learners of Finnish from non-related L1 backgrounds (German and Dutch). As a consequence of the similarities between Finnish and Estonian subject case-marking, the Estonian learners avoided using the partitive as the case of basic non-existential subjects, an error category abundantly produced by the German and Dutch learners. Although all learner corpora reflected seemingly similar partitive subject underuse error patterns, the Estonian learners' use of nominative plural instead of partitive plural was found to be partly due to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax and their use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular to negative influence of L1 morphology.

5.4 Estonian, German and Dutch learners’ use of partitive predicatives

5.4.1 The use, overuse and underuse of partitive predicatives

Figure 30 provides an overview of the use of partitive predicatives in the learner corpora and the native Finnish reference corpus. The category *partitive predicatives* represents the actual occurrence of partitive predicatives, regardless of whether or not the partitive was correctly used as the case of the predicative. The category *partitive-requiring contexts* refers to the copula constructions licensing a partitive predicative, regardless of whether the partitive was indeed realized as the case of the predicative. The error frequencies that are represented in the data table of figure 30 were calculated by subtracting the correctly used partitive predicatives from the partitive case-marked predicatives (*overuse errors* or incorrectly used partitive predicatives) and from the partitive-requiring contexts (*underuse errors* or not-realized PRCs).

As shown in figure 30, both partitive predicatives and partitive-requiring contexts are more frequent in the German and Dutch learner corpora than in the reference corpus. In contrast, partitive predicatives were very infrequently used in the Estonian learner corpus, whereas partitive-requiring contexts seem to occur to
a similar extent in the Estonian learner corpus as in the reference corpus. Considering partitive predicative overuse errors, the fairly similar error frequencies observed from the Dutch and German learner corpus are contrasted by a virtual lack of overuse errors in the Estonian learner corpus. In addition, figure 30 shows that the German learner corpus contains relatively more partitive predicative underuse errors than the other learner corpora, as well as substantially more under- than overuse errors. Log-likelihood statistical testing was employed to determine potential significant differences between the learner corpora and the reference corpus.

Fig. 30. The use of partitive predicatives.

With respect to the occurrence of partitive predicatives, statistical testing indicated various significant differences between the learner corpora and the reference corpus. While partitive predicatives appeared to be significantly more frequently used in the Dutch learner corpus than in the reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 26.10; p = .0001$) and significantly less frequently in the Estonian learner corpus than in the native reference corpus ($G^2 (1) = 123.36; p = .0001$), there were no
significant differences between the German learner corpus and the reference corpus \( (G^2 (1) = 4.53) \). Considering partitive predicative-requiring contexts, no significant differences were found to exist between the Estonian learner corpus and the reference corpus \( (G^2 (1) = 3.79) \). In contrast, PRCs occurred significantly more frequently in both the German and the Dutch learner corpus than in the reference corpus \( (G^2 (1) = 134.36; p = 0.001 \) and \( G^2 (1) = 66.93; p = 0.0001 \), respectively).

An overview of the use of partitive predicatives at different levels of L2 proficiency is provided in figure 31. Figure 31 illustrates that partitive predicatives and PRCs are virtually absent from the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus but gradually started to occur more frequently when proceeding to the higher proficiency levels. Neither the German nor the Dutch learner corpus was found to be characterized by a similar lack of partitive predicatives at the initial proficiency levels. The German learner corpus nevertheless also reflects an increase in partitive predicatives and PRCs with increasing L2 proficiency. In contrast, the Dutch learner corpus even shows a slight decrease of both categories, given that particularly PRCs are already in the A2 component of the Dutch learner corpus abundantly represented. Log-likelihood testing was employed to draw statistical comparisons between and within the learner corpora.

![Fig. 31. The use of partitive predicatives in the different proficiency components of the learner corpora.](image)
Statistical testing showed that partitive predicatives were significantly less frequently used in the A2, B1 and B2 components of the Estonian learner corpus than in the native reference corpus \( (G^2 (1) = 234.58; \ p = .0001; \ G^2 (1) = 73.93; \ p = .0001 \) and \( G^2 (1) = 6.64; \ p = .01) \). As indicated by the test statistics, the difference between the Estonian learner corpus and the reference corpus became smaller when proceeding from one proficiency level to the other. The A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus furthermore exhibited significantly fewer PRCs and its C1 component significantly more PRCs than the reference corpus \( (G^2 (1) = 68.54; \ p = .0001 \) and \( G^2 (1) = 37.39; \ p = .0001) \). While partitive predicatives were significantly less frequently used in the A2 component and significantly more frequently in the B2 component of the German learner corpus than in the reference corpus \( (G^2 (1) = 12.92; \ p = .001 \) and \( G^2 (1) = 26.64; \ p = .0001) \), each proficiency component of the German learner corpus appeared to contain significantly more PRCs than the reference corpus \( (A2: \ G^2 (1) = 9.40; \ p = .01; \ B1: \ G^2 (1) = 65.68; \ p = .0001 \) and \( B2: \ G^2 (1) = 64.60; \ p = .0001) \). The B2 component of the Dutch learner corpus did not significantly differ from the reference corpus, but its remaining proficiency components contained both significantly more partitive case-marked predicatives and significantly more PRCs than the reference corpus \( (A2: \ G^2 (1) = 8.44; \ p = .01 \) and \( G^2 (1) = 64.31; \ p = .0001; \ B1: \ G^2 (1) = 22.34; \ p = .0001 \) and \( G^2 (1) = 21.67; \ p = .0001) \).

As for the successive proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus, partitive predicatives were significantly more frequently used at B1 than at A2 \( (G^2 (1) = 80.21; \ p = .0001) \), at B2 than at B1 \( (G^2 (1) = 16.00; \ p = .0001) \) and at C1 than at B2 \( (G^2 (1) = 11.53; \ p = .001) \). In addition, PRCs occurred significantly more frequently at B1 than at A2 \( (G^2 (1) = 36.54; \ p = .0001) \) and at C1 than at B2 \( (G^2 (1) = 28.34; \ p = .0001) \). With regard to the German learner corpus, partitive predicatives also occurred significantly more frequently at B1 than at A2 \( (G^2 (1) = 11.50; \ p = .001) \) and at B2 than at B1 \( (G^2 (1) = 13.49; \ p = .001) \), while PRCs occurred to a similar extent across all proficiency levels. In addition, each proficiency component of the Dutch learner corpus contained similar amounts of partitive case-marked predicatives, but PRCs were significantly less common in its B1 than in its A2 component \( (G^2 (1) = 8.54; \ p = .01) \).

With the B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus as the one exception, partitive predicative underuse errors are in all learner corpora and across all proficiency levels relatively more common than partitive predicative overuse errors. In contrast to the remaining learner corpora, the Estonian learner corpus even shows a virtual lack of partitive overuse errors. Unlike overuse errors,
underuse errors generally become less frequent when proceeding from the lower to the upper levels of L2 proficiency. Statistical comparisons concerning the occurrence of partitive predicative errors will nonetheless not be drawn on the basis of the relative error frequencies provided in figure 18, but on the basis of error rates taking the varying amount of partitive predicatives and PRCs into account.

Hitherto, it was thus found that partitive predicatives were significantly more frequently used in the Dutch learner corpus and significantly less frequently in the Estonian learner corpus than in the reference corpus. These findings indicate a significant overrepresentation of partitive predicatives in the Dutch learner corpus and a significant underrepresentation in the Estonian learner corpus. Partitive predicative-requiring contexts occurred in both the German and the Dutch learner corpus significantly more frequently than in the reference corpus. A similar significant overrepresentation of partitive-requiring contexts was however not observed from the Estonian learner corpus, which contained a similar amount of PRCs as the native reference corpus. Unlike the German and the Dutch learner corpus, the Estonian learner corpus was shown to be characterized by a virtual lack of both partitive predicatives and PRCs at the level of A2 and a clear increase of both of these categories with increasing L2 proficiency. The significant underrepresentation of partitive predicatives in the Estonian learner corpus does therefore not only point to underuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative but also avoidance of partitive predicative-requiring contexts at the lower proficiency levels. These findings suggest conspicuous differences between the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other. More detailed analyses on the over- and underuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative were however conducted to gain insight into these findings.

5.4.2 The over- versus underuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative

In order to draw meaningful comparisons concerning the occurrence of partitive over- and underuse errors in the different learner corpora, error rates were calculated. The partitive predicative overuse error rate, reflecting the percentage of incorrectly used partitive predicatives, was calculated by relating the number of partitive predicative overuse errors to the total number of partitive case-marked predicatives. Accordingly, the partitive predicative underuse error rate, reflecting
the percentage of PRCs in which the partitive was not realized as the case of the predicative, was calculated by relating the partitive predicative underuse errors to the PRCs. The error rates calculated for each learner corpus as a whole as well as for each proficiency component are provided in figure 32. Error rates reflecting the over- and underuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative in the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus were incorporated to facilitate comparisons with the other learner corpora.

Figure 32 shows that approximately 8% (35/424) of the partitive predicatives contained in the Estonian learner corpus, 23% (126/560) of the partitive predicatives occurring in the German learner corpus and 21% (105/511) of the partitive predicative represented in the Dutch learner corpus were used incorrectly. In contrast, the partitive was in 40% (259/648) of the PRCs represented in the Estonian learner corpus, 46% (364/798) of the PRCs contained in the German learner corpus and 30% (174/580) of the PRCs occurring in the Dutch learner corpus not realized as the case of the predicative. In figure 32, it is also shown that partitive underuse error rates are higher than partitive overuse errors in all cases except for the B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus. Moreover, all learner corpora are particularly characterized by decreasing partitive underuse error rates with increasing L2 proficiency. While the Estonian learner corpus shows a rapidly decreasing partitive predicative underuse error rate
from 90% at A2 to 10% at C2, the remaining partitive predicative underuse error rates particularly decrease when proceeding from B1 to B2 (German learner corpus) and from A2 to B1 (Dutch learner corpus). While the Estonian and Dutch learner corpora furthermore show moderately decreasing overuse error rates, the German learner corpus is characterized by a U-shaped partitive predicative overuse error rate in that substantially higher overuse error rates were observed from its B1 component than from its A2 and B2 component.

Statistical testing revealed that the overall partitive overuse error rate observed from the Estonian learner corpus was significantly lower than the overuse error rates observed from both the German learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 32.39; \(p = .0001\)) and the Dutch learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 24.78; \(p = .0001\)), but that there were no significant differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 0.47). Restricting to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus did not lead to differences in the levels of significance. Considering the separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus showed at the level of B1 a significantly lower overuse error rate than the German learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 10.67; \(p = .01\)), and at the level of B2 a significantly lower error rate than both the German learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 12.68; \(p = .001\)) and the Dutch learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 12.84; \(p = .001\)). Although no significant differences were found to exist between the successive proficiency components of the Dutch learner corpus, both the Estonian and the German learner corpus were shown to exhibit significantly higher overuse error rates at the B1 than at the B2 level (G\(^2\) (1) = 9.01; \(p = .01\) and G\(^2\) (1) = 13.24; \(p = .001\), respectively).

With respect to the occurrence of partitive predicative underuse errors, there were no significant differences between the Estonian and the German learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 2.66), but the Dutch learner corpus was found to exhibit a significantly lower partitive underuse error rate than both the German learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 21.58; \(p = .0001\)) and the Estonian learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 8.70; \(p = .01\)). When comparing the Dutch learner corpus and the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, the underuse error rates differed even more (i.e. G\(^2\) (1) = 12.35; \(p = .0001\)). With regard to the separate proficiency components, the Dutch learner corpus differed at the A2 level significantly from the Estonian learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 12.77; \(p = .001\)) and at the B1 level significantly from both the Estonian and the German learner corpus (G\(^2\) (1) = 27.46; \(p = .01\) and G\(^2\) (1) = 39.39; \(p = .0001\)). Additionally, significant differences were found to exist between all successive proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus. The lower
proficiency component hereby generally showed a higher partitive underuse error rate than the higher proficiency component: The A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus revealed a significantly higher underuse error rate than its B1 component ($\chi^2 (1) = 11.24; p = .001$), the B1 component a significantly higher error rate than its B2 component ($\chi^2 (1) = 27.68; p = .0001$), and the C1 component a significantly higher underuse error rate than its C2 component ($\chi^2 (1) = 8.47; p = .01$). As the one exception to this, the Estonian learner corpus showed a significantly higher underuse error rate at C1 than at B2 ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.78; p = .01$). Like the difference between the C1 and C2 components, the difference between the B2 and C1 components did not appear to be strongly significant (i.e. $p = .01$). Furthermore, the German learner corpus showed a significantly higher partitive underuse error rate at B1 than at B2 ($\chi^2 (1) = 27.40; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus a significantly higher underuse error rate at A2 than at B1 ($\chi^2 (1) = 21.27; p = .0001$).

Although the differences between the over- and underuse error rates appeared to be the largest within the Estonian learner corpus, significantly higher under- than overuse error rates were not only observed from this corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 111.05; p = .0001$) but also from the German learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 51.63; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 9.62; p = .01$). Each proficiency component of the German learner corpus moreover exhibited a significantly higher under- than overuse error rate (A2: $\chi^2 (1) = 17.26; p = .0001$; B1: $\chi^2 (1) = 20.97; p = .0001$ and B2: $\chi^2 (1) = 10.35; p = .01$). Significantly higher under- than overuse error rates were within the Estonian learner corpus found at the levels B1 ($\chi^2 (1) = 36.28; p = .0001$), B2 ($\chi^2 (1) = 21.55; p = .0001$) and C1 ($\chi^2 (1) = 14.41; p = .001$) and within the Dutch learner corpus at the A2 level only ($\chi^2 (1) = 12.69; p = .001$).

On the whole, the Estonian learner corpus was thus characterized by significantly lower partitive predicative overuse error rates and the Dutch learner corpus by significantly lower partitive predicative underuse error rates than the remaining learner corpora. Although all learner corpora furthermore showed significantly higher partitive predicative under- than overuse error rates, the Estonian learner corpus was even found to exhibit a virtual lack of partitive predicative overuse errors. To elaborate on the differences between the error patterns observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora on the one hand and the Estonian learner corpora on the other, more detailed error analyses were conducted.
5.4.3 Partitive predicative overuse error patterns

To investigate the overuse error patterns in more detail, the partitive predicative overuse errors extracted from the learner corpora were divided into errors in which partitive singular predicatives were used instead of nominative singular predicatives, errors in which partitive plural predicatives were used instead of nominative plural predicatives and a category of remaining partitive predicative overuse errors. From table 34, it can be inferred that most overuse errors were errors in which nominative singular predicatives were replaced by partitive singular predicatives, and that all learner corpora showed a fairly similar distribution of the partitive predicative overuse errors.

The error classification in table 34 also shows that the vast majority of the overuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus (91% (32/35) versus 98% (124/126 vs. 103/105) of those extracted from the German and Dutch learner corpora) related to the nominative-partitive predicative case alternation. Moreover, most partitive predicative overuse errors turned out to be errors in which partitive singular was used instead of nominative singular (category 1 in table 34). More detailed analyses revealed that the Estonian learners made all of these category 1 errors (except for a single error) in affirmative sentence contexts. As for the German and Dutch learner corpora, a substantial 23% (26/113) versus 27% (25/91) out of the category 1 errors occurred in negated sentence contexts.
When relating the overuse errors to the total number of partitive singular and partitive plural predicatives rather than to the total number of partitive predicative overuse errors, approximately 13% (32/252) of the partitive singular predicatives in the Estonian learner corpus, 31% (114/362) of the partitive singular predicatives in the German learner corpus and 27% (91/338) of the partitive singular predicatives in the Dutch learner corpus appeared to have been used incorrectly. Additionally, a marginal 1% (2/170) of the partitive plural predicatives contained in the Estonian learner corpus, 6% (12/198) of the partitive plural predicatives in the German learner corpus and 9% (14/171) of the partitive plural predicatives in the Dutch learner corpus were incorrectly used. Complemented by error rates calculated for each separate proficiency level, figure 33 represents an overview of these overall partitive singular and partitive plural overuse error rates.

Considering the error rates calculated for each separate proficiency component (represented in figure 33), all learner corpora are shown to exhibit substantially lower partitive plural than partitive singular overuse error rates. Except for the C2 component of the Estonian learner corpus and the A2 component of the German learner corpus, the partitive plural overuse error rates are even at all proficiency levels exceeded by the partitive singular overuse error rates. The Estonian learner corpus is particularly characterized by the complete
absence of partitive plural overuse errors at all proficiency levels (except for the B1 level) and the German learner corpus by a moderately decreasing partitive plural overuse error rate with increasing L2 proficiency. As for the overuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative, the Estonian learner corpus shows a clearly decreasing error rate when proceeding from the lower to the upper levels of proficiency. In contrast, a similar pattern was not observed from the remaining learner corpora, as the German and Dutch learner corpora show higher partitive singular overuse error rates at B1 than at both A2 and B2.

Fig. 33. The overuse of partitive singular and partitive plural as the case of the predicative.

With respect to the overuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative, statistical testing revealed for the Estonian learner corpus significantly lower error rates than for both the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 23.35; p = .0001$) and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 15.33; p = .0001$). However, no significant differences were found between the German and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 0.96$). When narrowing down to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, the German and the Dutch learner corpus turned out to differ less strongly, but still significantly, from the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 14.57; p = .001$ and
Considering the separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus showed at the B2 level a significantly lower error rate than the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 13.30; p = .001$). While significant differences between the successive proficiency components were neither observed from the German nor from the Dutch learner corpus, the B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus was found to exhibit a significantly lower error rate than its B1 component ($G^2 (1) = 7.06; p = .01$).

Concerning the overuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative, the Estonian learner corpus appeared to reflect a significantly lower error rate than the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 10.95; p = .001$), while the German learner corpus was neither found to significantly differ from the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 6.48$) nor from the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 0.83$). Narrowing down to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, the difference between the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus turned out to be smaller and less strongly significant ($G^2 (1) = 8.23; p = .01$). Considering the separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus showed at the B2 level a significantly lower error rate than the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 8.58; p = .01$). Significant differences between the successive proficiency components were not observed.

Furthermore, all learner corpora were shown to exhibit significantly lower partitive plural than partitive singular overuse error rates (Estonian LC: $G^2 (1) = 22.78; p = .0001$; German LC: $G^2 (1) = 44.50; p = .0001$; Dutch LC: $G^2 (1) = 22.05; p = .0001$). Significant differences between the partitive singular and plural overuse error rates were found at B1 and B2 for both the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 10.37; p = .01$ and $G^2 (1) = 7.67; p = .01$) and the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 15.23; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 15.69; p = .0001$) and only at the B1 level for the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 15.63; p = .0001$).

### 5.4.4 Partitive predicative underuse error patterns

The partitive predicative underuse errors were classified into error categories on the basis of the case endings that were used to replace the partitive. An overview of this error classification is provided in table 35. As shown, the partitive predicative underuse errors were classified into three main categories. However, although the same main error categories were observed from all learner corpora, a comparison between the different learner corpora indicates that there were some consistencies and discrepancies in how the errors were distributed.
For all learner corpora, the majority of the partitive predicative underuse errors corresponded to use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular. While nominative plural was in the Estonian learner corpus often erroneously used as the case of the predicative (i.e. in 40% of all underuse errors), the same error category was relatively less commonly represented in the remaining learner corpora. Conversely, substitution of partitive plural by nominative singular was shown to be relatively less frequent in the Estonian learner corpus than in the remaining learner corpora. Partitive predicative underuse errors other than these three main categories were marginally represented in all learner corpora, but particularly in the Estonian learner corpus.

Table 35. The partitive predicative underuse error classification.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partitive predicative underuse error category</th>
<th>Learner Corpus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch LC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom sg instead of part sg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruoka on *halpa.</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(117/174)</td>
<td>(209/364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom pl instead of part pl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me olemme kaikki *surulliset.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18/174)</td>
<td>(45/364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nom sg instead of part pl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lapset ovat *tuhma.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(34/174)</td>
<td>(88/364)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remaining he olivat *loisiistil.</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5/174)</td>
<td>(12/364)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modifying the error classification represented in table 35 into dichotomous underuse error rates, the underuse errors were related to the number of contexts requiring a partitive singular or plural predicative rather than to the total number of partitive predicative underuse errors. The obtained partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates are provided in figure 34. As can be inferred from this figure, all learner corpora are characterized by relatively high underuse error rates as well as particularly by a decreasing partitive plural underuse error rate with increasing L2 proficiency. On the whole, in 37.5% of the singular PRCs (138/368) and 41.5% of the plural PRCs (120/289) occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, in 46% of the singular PRCs (218/471) and 43% of the plural
PRCs (143/333) occurring in the German learner corpus and in 32.5% of the singular PRCs (118/364) and 24.5% of the plural PRCs (52/213) occurring in the Dutch learner corpus, the partitive was not realized as the case of the predicative. As for the separate proficiency components, the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus is in particular characterized by high underuse error rates. In nearly 90% of the singular and plural PRCs contained in the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus, the partitive was namely not realized as the case of the predicative.

![Fig. 34. The underuse of partitive singular and partitive plural as the case of the predicative.](image)

Considering the underuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative, the Estonian learner corpus as a whole did neither significantly differ from the German learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 3.80$) nor from the Dutch learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 1.35$) but the Dutch learner corpus showed a significantly lower error rate than the German learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 10.01; p = .01$). Comparing the separate proficiency components of the learner corpora to each other, significant differences were only found between the B1 components of the German and the Dutch learner corpus ($\chi^2 (1) = 15.76; p = .0001$). Furthermore, the Estonian learner corpus was found to be characterized by significantly lower error rates at B2 than at B1 ($\chi^2 (1) = 10.95; p = .001$) and at C2 than at C1 ($\chi^2 (1) = 6.69; p =
the Dutch learner corpus by a significantly lower error rate at B1 than at A2 (G\(2\) (1) = 9.52; \(p = .01\)) and the German learner corpus by a lack of significant differences between its proficiency components.

As for the underuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative, the Dutch learner corpus showed a significantly lower overall error rate than both the German learner corpus (G\(2\) (1) = 13.15; \(p = .001\)) and the Estonian learner corpus (G\(2\) (1) = 10.87; \(p = .01\)). When comparing the Dutch learner corpus and the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, this difference even turned out to be more strongly significant (G\(2\) (1) = 15.54; \(p = .0001\)). In contrast, there were no significant differences between the Estonian and the German learner corpora (G\(2\) (1) = 0.07). Turning to the separate proficiency components, the Dutch learner corpus merely exhibited a significantly lower error rate than the German and Estonian learner corpora at the B1 level (G\(2\) (1) = 16.01; \(p = .0001\) and G\(2\) (1) = 24.61; \(p = .0001\), respectively). In addition, the Estonian and the German learner corpus showed significantly lower error rates at B2 than at B1 (G\(2\) (1) = 17.99; \(p = .0001\) and G\(2\) (1) = 40.21; \(p = .0001\), respectively) and the Dutch learner corpus a significantly lower error rate at B1 than at A2 (G\(2\) (1) = 12.04; \(p = .001\)).

Within both the Estonian learner corpus and the Dutch learner corpus, there were no significant differences between the partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates, neither for the overall corpora (G\(2\) (1) = 0.66 and G\(2\) (1) = 3.00, respectively) nor for any of the separate proficiency components. Although the partitive singular and partitive plural underuse error rates observed from the German learner corpus as a whole did also not significantly differ (G\(2\) (1) = 0.49), statistical testing revealed that the B2 component of the German learner corpus exhibited a significantly higher partitive singular than partitive plural underuse error rate (G\(2\) (1) = 16.52; \(p = .0001\)).

The underuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative

Elaborating on the underuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative, figure 35 illustrates how the partitive plural error rates were built up. As shown in this figure, partitive plural predicatives were in all learner corpora replaced by either nominative plural or nominative singular predicatives, but not to a similar extent across the corpora. As for the Estonian learner corpus, partitive plural was in 36% (103/289) of the partitive plural-requiring contexts replaced by nominative plural and in nearly 6% (17/289) by nominative singular. In contrast, nominative plural was in 13.5% (45/333) and nominative singular in 29%
(98/333) of the plural PRCs occurring in the German learner corpus used as the case of the predicative. In a similar vein, nominative plural was in 8.5% (18/213) and nominative singular in 16% (34/213) of the plural PRCs contained in the Dutch learner corpus used instead of partitive plural.

Substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural thus appeared to be particularly common in the Estonian learner corpus and replacements of partitive plural by nominative singular in the German and Dutch learner corpus. In figure 35, it is also shown that the latter error category clearly decreases when proceeding from the lower to the higher proficiency components of the German and Dutch learner corpora and the former particularly when proceeding from the lower to the higher proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus.

Although figure 35 already indicates conspicuous differences between the Estonian learner corpus and the remaining corpora, statistical comparisons were drawn to determine whether these differences were significant. Statistical testing showed that the replacement of partitive plural by nominative singular was not only significantly less common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the German and Dutch learner corpora ($G^2 (1) = 52.17; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 12.15; p = .001$, respectively) but also significantly less common in the Dutch learner corpus than in the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 10.31; p = .01$). When restricting to the A2-B2 part of the Estonian learner corpus, the difference between the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus turned out to be less strongly significant: $G^2 (1) = 8.74; p = .01$. Considering the different proficiency components, significant differences between the Estonian and the German learner corpus were found at the levels A2 and B1 ($G^2 (1) = 12.21; p = .001$ and $G^2 (1) = 32.38; p = .0001$), significant differences between the Estonian and the Dutch learner corpus merely at A2 ($G^2 (1) = 6.84; p = .01$) and significant differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus merely at B1 ($G^2 (1) = 17.17; p = .0001$).

While there were no significant differences between the successive proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus, substitution of partitive plural by nominative singular appeared to be significantly more common in the B1 than in the B2 component of the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 28.54; p = .0001$) and in the A2 than in the B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 7.32; p = .01$). By contrast, the replacement of partitive plural by nominative plural was shown to be significantly more common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the German and Dutch learner corpora ($G^2 (1) = 46.83; p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 56.51; p = .0001$), while there were no significant differences between the German and the Dutch learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 3.01$). Restricting to the A2-B1 components of
the Estonian learner corpus did not lead to differences in the levels of significance. Considering the separate proficiency components, the Estonian learner corpus was found to significantly differ from the German and Dutch learner corpora at the levels A2 ($G^2 (1) = 8.61; p = .01$) and B1 ($G^2 (1) = 15.00; p = .001$). However, there were no significant differences between the successive proficiency components of the Dutch learner corpus, substitution of partitive plural by nominative plural occurred significantly more frequently in the B1 than in the B2 components of both the Estonian learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 16.23; p = .0001$) and the German learner corpus ($G^2 (1) = 14.58; p = .001$).

5.4.5 Interpretation and elaboration of the error analyses

The over- and underuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative

In figure 36, the error rates reflecting over- and underuse of partitive singular (SG) are contrastively plotted. These error rates are the same as embedded in figure 33 (overuse of partitive singular and partitive plural as the case of the predicative) and figure 34 (underuse of partitive singular and partitive plural as the case of the predicative). Rather than zooming in on either the over- or underuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative, the purpose of figure 36 is
to bridge the gap between the partitive singular over- and underuse rates and to serve as a transition toward more detailed analyses on the types of subjects the predicatives refer to. Concerning the overuse and underuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative, figure 36 shows that the overall error rates are all within the same range, with the partitive singular overuse error rate extracted from the Estonian learner corpus as the one exception. Furthermore, the Estonian learner corpus shows a general decrease of both the overuse and underuse error rates with increasing L2 proficiency, while the remaining learner corpora do not particularly reflect such a pattern.

Fig. 36. The overuse and underuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative.

Statistical comparisons did neither within the German learner corpus nor within the Dutch learner corpus reveal significant differences between the overuse and underuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative ($G^2 (1) = 1.66$ and $G^2 (1) = 1.59$, respectively), whereas the Estonian learner corpus was found to exhibit a significantly lower partitive singular overuse than underuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 37.15; p = .0001$). Within the separate proficiency com-ponents of the Estonian learner corpus, significantly lower over- than underuse error rates were found at the B1, B2 and C1 levels of proficiency ($G^2 (1) = 9.14; p = .01; G^2 (1) = 9.41; p = .01$ and $G^2 (1) = 9.37; p = .01$, respectively).
The above provided analyses indicate clear patterns in the learners' over- versus underuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative. Regarding the partitive singular over- and underuse error rates, the only significant differences were found within the Estonian learner corpus. Altogether, these findings suggest both inter- and intralingual influence. The over- versus underuse error patterns concerning the use of partitive singular as the case of the predicative indicate that all groups of learners frequently and persistently refer to bounded entities by a partitive singular predicative and to unbounded entities by a nominative singular predicative. As discussed in the preceding, the lack of a clear boundary between indivisible and divisible Finnish nouns has obviously had a role in this. However, influence of Estonian morphosyntax is also manifested in that the Estonian learners to a lesser extent than their German and Dutch peers tend to overuse the partitive as the case of the predicative.

Overuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative

From the detailed analyses on the incorrect use of partitive predicatives, it was revealed that nearly all partitive predicative overuse errors related to the nominative-partitive predicative case alternation. Out of these, the vast majority (for all learner corpora approximately 90%) were substitutions of partitive singular by nominative singular. While approximately one out of four of these overuse errors observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora were made in negated sentence contexts, the Estonian learners made nearly all of them in affirmative sentences. This section first discusses the overuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative in affirmative sentence contexts. The overuse of partitive singular as the case of the predicative in negated sentence contexts will be addressed hereafter, followed by the substitution of nominative plural by partitive plural and the category of remaining overuse errors.

In order to gain more insight into the replacements of nominative singular by partitive singular in affirmative contexts, the partitive predicative overuse errors in question were more closely investigated by zooming in on the copula subjects they refer to. Firstly, the subjects of these predicatives generally appeared to be singular nouns denoting a bounded entity. Such nouns are generally classified as indivisible nouns. Of these nouns, those referred to by a partitive singular predicative either multiple times in at least one learner corpus or at least once in more than one learner corpus are listed in table 36. As shown in this table, the nouns elokuva and filmi (‘movie’) were the indivisible nouns most frequently
referred to by a partitive singular predicative. An error example involving the indivisible noun *elokuva* is provided in (116), after table 36.

**Table 36. Indivisible nouns in the learner corpora frequently referred to by partitive singular predicatives.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indivisible noun</th>
<th>Estonian LC</th>
<th>German LC</th>
<th>Dutch LC</th>
<th>total freq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 elokuva – filmi ‘movie’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 tunnelma ‘atmosphere’</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 aihe ‘subject’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 esitelmä – esitys ‘presentation’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 kertomus – tarina ‘story’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 maa ‘world’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 runo ‘poem’</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ajatus – idea ‘idea’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 kaupunki ‘city’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 kesä ‘summer’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 merkitys ‘meaning’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 ongelma ‘problem’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Suomi ‘Finland’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 teoria ‘theory’</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 tyyli ‘style’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 vastaus ‘answer’</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(116) B1 component of the German learner corpus

**Error example**  *Elokuva oli oikein *hauskaa.*

movie(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg very nice-Part.Sg

**Target-like**  *Elokuva oli oikein hauska.*

movie(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg very nice(Nom.Sg)

'The movie was very nice.'
Seeking for potential common features between the nouns listed in table 36, the hypothesis arises that the learners probably choose to refer to these kinds of nouns by partitive singular predicatives because they mistakenly interpreted them as divisible rather than indivisible nouns. An explanation for the learners’ tendency of using partitive predicatives to refer to indivisible subject nouns thus probably has to be sought in the distinction between divisible and indivisible nouns. Recalling what was outlined in 2.3.3, Finnish nouns are divided into indivisible and divisible nouns. Indivisible nouns are also called *count nouns* because they constitute countable, bounded wholes. In contrast, divisible nouns denote unbounded entities existing of multiple equivalent parts. Indivisible nouns cannot be divided into parts in a similar vein as divisible nouns, because a part of an indivisible entity does not embody the same as its whole. In Finnish, mass nouns and uncountable abstract nouns fall into the category of divisible nouns. It may nevertheless be far less self-evident in some cases than in others whether an abstract noun is indeed perceived as divisible (and thus licenses a partitive predicative).

Since learners of Finnish as a foreign language are not native speakers of Finnish, they do not intuitively know which Finnish nouns are perceived as divisible and which are perceived as indivisible. Yet, relevant knowledge concerning this matter cannot be acquired other-wise than by usage and exposure. A lack of such relevant knowledge could possibly lead learners to form their own perception of the divisibility-indivisibility distinction. In this respect, there definitely seems to be a rationale behind the learners’ tendency to interpret nouns as those listed in table 36 as divisible rather than indivisible. First, the learners seemed to erroneously have assumed that abstract nouns are by definition divisible. In accordance with this assumption, they possibly considered nouns like, *aihe* (‘topic’), *merkitys* (‘meaning’), *ongelma* (‘problem’) and *vastaus* (‘answer’) as divisible. All of these nouns are indeed fairly abstract in the sense that they do not refer to concrete, touchable items (in contrast to nouns like *kynä* (‘pencil’)). However, the nouns can all be counted (e.g. *Sanalla on kaksi merkitystä* (‘The word has two meanings’)) and thus license a nominative rather than a partitive predicative.

Similar assumptions probably made the learners to also interpret the remaining nouns as divisible. The learners may for example often have interpreted indivisible nouns as divisible based on the semantics and on the underlying structure of the nouns. A substantial proportion of the nouns listed in table 36 namely denote entities that can be divided into (fairly) equivalent parts: A
movie (*elokuva*) can for example be divided into multiple scenes, a book story (*tarina*) into paragraphs or chapters, the world (*maailma*) into continents, a poem (*runo*) into strophes, a city (*kaupunki*) into street blocks and the country of Finland (*Suomi*) into municipalities.

This suggests that the learners mistakenly have assumed that entities that can be divided into parts are by definition divisible. Indivisible entities can however not only be divided into multiple equivalent parts but each of these parts also embodies the same as its whole, a principle that does not hold true for the nouns listed in table 36. A movie does for example indeed consist of multiple scenes but, as each of its scenes does not equal the movie as a whole, a movie actually represents a bounded whole that is constituted of all of its scenes put together. What the above outlined basically suggests is that learners seem to strive for finding some underlying semantic logic themselves, so that they can come to grips with the divisibility-indivisibility distinction for which their intuitive competence falls short and clear-cut L2 rules cannot be provided by their Finnish language teachers.

As for subjects other than singular indivisible nouns that were erroneously referred to by partitive singular predicatives, the demonstrative pronoun subject *se* (‘that’) stood out when functioning as the subject of a bounded substantive predicative. An example of such an overuse error is provided in (117a). In this example, the predicative noun phrase *hyvä juttu* (‘good thing’) incorrectly bears partitive case.

(117a) (B2 component of the Dutch learner corpus)  
* Error example  
  *Se on aika *hyvää juttua.*  
  that(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg fairly good-Part.Sg thing-Part.Sg  
  'That is a fairly good thing'

* Target-like  
  *Se on aika hyvä juttu.*  
  that(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg fairly good(Nom.Sg) thing(Nom.Sg)

'Very good thing'

Unlike adjective predicatives, the case of singular substantive predicatives is determined by the quantitative boundedness of the predicative itself, rather than by the quantitative unboundedness of the subject referent (cf. 2.3.5). Taking into consideration that the learners used substantially more singular adjective than
singular substantive predicatives (88% (223/253) of the singular partitive predicatives contained in the Estonian learner corpus were adjective predicatives versus 83% (300/362) in the German learner corpus and 80% (273/338) in the Dutch learner corpus) and an adjective predicative would under similar circumstances indeed take partitive singular (cf. 117b), this has obviously had an influence on the emergence of overuse errors like (117a). The learners may either occasionally have been inclined to apply the principles for adjective predicative case-marking also to substantive predicatives or alternatively, they might not even have considered the word class of the predicative but simply have assumed that a partitive predicative was required because of the fact that the demonstrative pronoun *se* functioned as the copula subject. In many but certainly not in all cases (cf. (117c)), this demonstrative pronoun may namely indeed have an abstract antecedent and consequently denote an unbounded entity.

(117b)
*Comparison example*  
*(se → unbounded entity)*

**Juon kahvia, koska se on hyvää.**

*drink-1Sg coffee-Part.Sg 'cause that(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg good-Part.Sg*

'I drink coffee because I like it.' (Lit. 'because it is good')

(117c)
*Comparison example*  
*(se → bounded entity)*

**Ostin pyörän eilen ja se on aivan uusi.**

*buy-Past.1Sg bike-Gen.Sg yesterday and that(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg fully new(Nom.Sg)*

'I bought the bike yesterday and it is brand new.'

*Substitutions of nominative singular by partitive singular in negated sentence contexts*

Although the case of the object and existential subject is affected by negative polarity, this is not the case for predicatives. As demonstrated, both the German and the Dutch learner corpus however contained several partitive predicative overuse errors suggesting overgeneralization of the principles for object and
existential subject case marking. Two of these examples are shown in (118) and (119). Both sentences are structured the same way in that a partitive and a nominative singular predicative were coordinated. The partitive singular predicative occurs in the negated and the nominative singular predicative in the affirmative sentence part, although both predicatives refer to the same bounded subject (i.e. the covert first person singular pronoun in (118) and the count noun jumala 'God' in (119). The predicative case should thus have been nominative singular in both cases, but the learners obviously choose partitive singular on the basis of the negative polarity of the former sentence part, and nominative singular on the basis of the affirmative polarity of the latter part.

(118) B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example Oikeastaan en ollut *sairasta, vain hyvin väsynyt.
actually be-Neg.1Sg sick-Part.Sg only very tired(Nom.Sg)

Target-like Oikeastaan en ollut sairas, vain hyvin väsynyt.
actually be-Neg.1Sg sick(Nom.Sg) only very tired(Nom.Sg)

'I was actually not ill; just very tired.'

(119) B2 component of the German learner corpus

Error example Jumala ei ole *rankaisevaa vaan hyvä.
God(Nom.Sg) be-Neg.3Sg punishful-Part.Sg but good(Nom.Sg)

Target-like Jumala ei ole rankaiseva vaan hyvä.
God(Nom.Sg) be-Neg.3Sg punishful(Nom.Sg) but good(Nom.Sg)

'God is not punitive but He is good.'

As mentioned in the preceding, errors as exemplified in (118) and (119) were represented in the German and Dutch learner corpora but not in the Estonian learner corpus. The absence of partitive predicative overuse errors in negated sentence contexts thus distinguishes the Estonian learner corpus from the other learner corpora. The presence of partitive predicative overuse errors in the German and Dutch learner corpus therefore indicates intralingual influence and the absence of similar errors in the Estonian learner corpus positive influence of
L1 morphosyntax. In other words, the German and Dutch learners occasionally seemed to have assumed that negative polarity also affects the case of the predicative (analogous with the case of the object and existential subject), while the Estonian learners fail to show similar behaviour, obviously because Estonian lacks an equivalent to the Finnish nominative-partitive predicative case alternation.

*Substitutions of nominative plural by partitive plural*

Overuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative did not turn out to be particularly common in the learner corpora. An error example in which a nominative plural predicative was replaced by a partitive plural predicative is provided in (120a). The lack of partitive plural overuse errors is well-motivated when recalling the general principles of plural predicative case-marking in Finnish: Plural subjects generally denote an unbounded set of entities and therefore take partitive plural predicatives; only a marginal category of plural subjects may denote bounded sets of entities or bounded wholes (e.g. *pluralia tantum*) and thus take nominative plural predicatives. The substitution of nominative plural by partitive plural (exemplified in (120b)) suggests that the general principle for plural predicative case-marking (a plural subject generally licenses a partitive plural predicative; cf. (120b)) was occasionally overgeneralized when plural subjects referred to bounded wholes.

```
(120a)
Error example    (B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus)

Elinan suhteet opettajan kanssa ovat *huonoja
Elina-Gen.Sg connection-Nom.Pl teacher-Gen.Sg with-Postp be-3Pl bad-Part.Pl

Target-like sentence    (subject ➔ bounded set of entities)

Elinan suhteet opettajan kanssa ovat *huonot.
Elina-Gen.Sg connection-Nom.Pl teacher-Gen.Sg with-Postp be-3Pl bad-Nom.Pl

'Elina's relationship with the teacher is bad.' (Lit.: 'connections')
```
Comparison example (subject → unbounded set of entities)

\[ \text{Elinan opettajat ovat mukavia.} \]

they(Nom) be-3Pl nice-Part.Pl

'Elina's teachers are nice.'

The category of remaining partitive predicative overuse errors

Notwithstanding that partitive predicative overuse errors classified as remaining partitive predicative overuse errors were marginally represented in all learner corpora, inspection of these errors led to some interesting observations. In the first place, all remaining partitive predicative overuse errors were found to be of the same error type, which is illustrated in (121).

\[ \text{(121)} \]

Error example (C1 component of the Estonian learner corpus)

\[ \text{Kaikki tuntuu *mahdollista.} \]

all(Nom) feel-3Sg possible-Part.Sg

Target-like sentences

(1) \text{Kaikki tuntuu mahdolliselta.}  
all(Nom) feel-3Sg possible-Abl.Sg

(2) \text{Kaikki on mahdollista.}  
all(Nom) feel-3Sg possible-Part.Sg

'Everything feels possible.'  
'Everything is possible.'

Estonian equivalent sentences

(1) \text{Kõik tundub võimalik.}  
all(Nom) feel-3Sg possible(Nom.Sg)

(2) \text{Kõik on võimalik.}  
all(Nom) feel-3Sg possible(Nom.Sg)

'Everything feels possible.'  
'Everything is possible.'
In error example (121), the verb *tuntua* ('to feel') was used in conjunction with a partitive predicative, possibly analogously to the copula construction *kaikki on mahdollista* (cf. target-like 2). The nominative-partitive predicative case does however not pertain to constructions involving perception verbs such as *tuntua* ('to feel'), *näyttää* ('to look'), *kuulostaa* ('to sound') and *vaikuttaa* ('to seem'), as these verbs take ablative (or alternatively allative) complements in Finnish. The learners nevertheless seemed to occasionally have overgeneralized the nominative-partitive predicative case alternation to these kinds of sentences, probably because they observed certain similarities to the copula construction. The remaining partitive predicative overuse errors observed from the learner corpora could thus possibly be interpreted as instances of intralingual influence.

Considering the Estonian equivalent sentences also provided in (121), it however becomes obvious that in Estonian, perception verbs do license predicatives and no ablative or allative complements as in Finnish. In accordance with the Estonian principles for predicative case-marking, nominative singular would thus be assigned in cases of a predicative co-occurring with a perception verb (*tunda* 'to feel' in (58.1)) and a predicative co-occurring with a copula verb (*olla* 'to be' in (121.2)). As for the Estonian learners, partitive predicative overuse errors as exemplified (58) do thus not merely have to be due to confusion between the Finnish target-like structures (1)-(2), but the Estonian construction consisting of a perception verb and a nominative predicative (cf. Estonian equivalent 1) may have led them into the direction of the Finnish nominative-partitive predicative case alternation, and subsequently into the direction of the partitive as the case of the predicative. The Estonian learners’ partitive predicative overuse errors exemplified in (121) may therefore possibly reflect an interaction between intra- and interlingual influence.

*Underuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative*

*Substitutions of partitive singular by nominative singular*

In the elaboration section on partitive predicative overuse errors, the overuse errors in which partitive singular was replaced by nominative singular were analyzed in the light of the copula subjects the predicatives referred to. These subjects turned out to be singular count nouns or demonstrative pronouns (mostly *se* ‘that’). In order to similarly address the opposite of this category of partitive
predicative overuse errors (i.e. the partitive predicative underuse errors in which nominative singular was used instead of partitive singular; underuse error category 1), these errors were also analyzed on the types of subjects they referred to. Table 37 shows an overview of this analysis.

As illustrated by table 37, the majority of the erroneous nominative singular predicatives referred to an abstract noun or pronoun (1.2). Such an abstract subject referent could either be a verbal noun ending in -minen (1.2.1), another kind of abstract noun (1.2.2) or a demonstrative pronoun referring to an abstract entity (1.2.3). Verbal nouns ending in the derivational suffix -minen (e.g. kirjoittaminen ‘writing’ > kirjoittaa ‘to write’) were treated as a separate category because they constitute a clear-cut, large category of abstract nouns that can be distinguished on the basis of their derivational ending. The abstract nouns in 1.2.2 were also frequently derived from verbs (e.g. kasvatus ‘education’ > kasvattaa ‘to raise’) but they do not represent a similar clear-cut category but, unlike verbal nouns ending in –minen, they constitute a heterogeneous collection of abstract nouns in that they involve a large number of different derivational endings.

When comparing the learner corpora, table 37 indicates that nominative singular predicatives were in the Estonian learner corpus proportionally most frequently used to refer to abstract nouns other than verbal nouns ending in –minen. More detailed analyses revealed that of the abstract nouns of this category (1.2.2.), the noun kieli (‘language’) was in all learner corpora most frequently referred to by a nominative singular predicative, followed by nouns such as terveys (‘health’), musiikki (‘music’), käyttö (‘use’) and opiskelu (‘study’). An error example of the abstract noun kieli referred to by a nominative predicative is provided in (122), after table 37.
Table 37. The use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular in relation to the types of subjects the predicatives refer to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject referent</th>
<th>Learner Corpus</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dutch LC</td>
<td>German LC</td>
<td>Estonian LC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 nominative singular instead of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>partitive singular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 mass noun</td>
<td>67% (117/174)</td>
<td>57% (209/364)</td>
<td>53% (135/256)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3% (3/117)</td>
<td>4% (8/209)</td>
<td>5% (7/138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 abstract noun or pronoun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80% (94/117)</td>
<td>57% (120/209)</td>
<td>67% (92/138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1 verbal noun ending in -minen</td>
<td>28% (26/94)</td>
<td>13% (15/120)</td>
<td>9% (8/92)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2 other abstract noun</td>
<td>34% (32/94)</td>
<td>43% (52/120)</td>
<td>60% (55/92)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3 demonstrative pronoun referring to</td>
<td>38% (36/94)</td>
<td>44% (53/120)</td>
<td>31% (29/92)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abstract entity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 dependent clause or sentence</td>
<td>13% (15/117)</td>
<td>30% (61/209)</td>
<td>9% (13/138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.1 dependent clause starting with</td>
<td>73% (11/15)</td>
<td>69% (42/61)</td>
<td>31% (4/13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>että (&quot;that&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.2 other dependent clause</td>
<td>0% (0/15)</td>
<td>7% (4/61)</td>
<td>8% (1/13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3.3 sentence referent</td>
<td>27% (4/15)</td>
<td>24% (15/61)</td>
<td>61% (8/13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 zero referent</td>
<td>4% (5/117)</td>
<td>10% (20/209)</td>
<td>19% (26/138)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A2 component of the Dutch learner corpus

Error example

Suomen kieli on kiehtova.

Finland-Gen.Sg language(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg fascinating(Nom.Sg)

Target-like

Suomen kieli on kiehtovaa.

Finland-Gen.Sg language(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg fascinating-Part.Sg

‘The Finnish language is fascinating.’

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Furthermore, nominative singular predicatives were in all learner corpora to a fairly similar extent used to refer to demonstrative pronominal subjects functioning as the antecedent of abstract entities (1.2.3). When a demonstrative pronominal subject was incorrectly referred to by a nominative predicative, this was in nearly all cases the pronoun *se* (‘that’). Demonstrative pronominal subjects probably relate to a substantial proportion of the category 1 underuse errors, because they involve a double antecedent construction (i.e. the predicative refers to the subject; the subject to its antecedent). In error example (123), the demonstrative pronominal subject *se* is referred to by a nominative singular predicative, while the demonstrative pronoun pertains to the abstract activity of *eating out*.

(123)

*Error example (A2 component of the Dutch learner corpus)*

En syö usein ulkona, koska *se* on liian kallis.

eat-Neg.1.Sg often out-Ess.Sg because that(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg too expensive(Nom.Sg)

*Target-like*

En syö usein ulkona, koska *se* on liian kallista.

eat-Neg.1.Sg often out-Ess.Sg because that(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg too expensive-Part.Sg

‘I do not often eat out, because *that* is too *expensive*.’

*On the absence of negative influence of L1 morphology in the use of partitive predicatives*

As for both the use of partitive objects and partitive subjects, a substantial part of the partitive singular underuse errors were attributed to negative influence of L1 morphology (cf. 5.2.5, pg. 123–126 for objects; and 5.3.5, pg. 154–156 for subjects). These erroneous objects and subjects seemed to be Finnish nominative singular forms, but they merely ended up as such because of the overlap between the Estonian partitive and the Finnish nominative singular noun forms. Most of these nouns turned out to have a phonologically similar noun stem in both Finnish and Estonian. Interestingly, the Estonian learner corpus was not found to contain instances of partitive predicative underuse errors that could be attributed to
negative influence of L1 morphology. From this, the question arises whether the lack of evidence of negative influence of L1 morphology in the use of predicatives weakens the evidence for the existence of negative influence of L1 morphology in the use of objects and subjects. In an attempt to address this question, the partitive predicative-requiring contexts were analyzed in more detail.

Analyzing the word class of the partitive predicative-requiring contexts, 13% (87/647) turned out to be substantive predicatives and 87% (560/647) adjective predicatives. As adjective predicative constituted the vast majority of the PRCs, the L1-L2 adjective inflection patterns were analyzed in order to gain more insight into the lack of negative influence of L1 morphology in the Estonian learners' use of partitive predicatives. Table 38 provides an overview of the adjectives that most frequently occurred in partitive predicative-requiring contexts, complemented with their Estonian equivalents and English translations.

First, table 38 does not indicate any coincidental overlap between the Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive singular forms of these adjectives. Furthermore, phonologically similar adjectives or phonologically similar adjective stems are only marginally represented. The top three most frequently occurring adjectives in partitive predicative-requiring contexts contained in the Estonian learner corpus (vaikea, helppo and mahdollinen) all have phonologically different equivalents in Estonian (i.e. raske, lihtne and võimalik). The adjectives tärkeä, hyvä, selvä and terveellinen have phonologically similar Estonian equivalents (i.e. tähtis, hea, selge and tervislik) that are nevertheless inflected in a different way. The Finnish adjectives samanlainen, nuori and tavallinen find their phonologically similar equivalent in the Estonian adjectives samasugune, noor and tavaline. All three have similar inflection in both languages (the Estonian adjectives merely differ from Finnish with respect to the genitive -n deletion and the final vowel deletion in the partitive: -tA vs. -t) and the latter two also have a phonologically similar stem in both languages. The partitive singular forms of these adjectives are thus the only ones represented in table 38 that are fairly similar in Finnish and Estonian.
Table 38. The inflection of the adjectives most frequently used in the partitive-predicative-requiring contexts occurring in the Estonian learner corpus, complemented by the inflection of their Estonian equivalents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abs. freq (PRC)</th>
<th>Finnish adjective</th>
<th>Estonian equivalent</th>
<th>English translation</th>
<th>Adjective inflection</th>
<th>Adjective inflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>genitive</td>
<td>partitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>Estonian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>vaikea</td>
<td>raske</td>
<td>‘difficult’</td>
<td>vaikea-n</td>
<td>raske-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>helppo</td>
<td>lihtne</td>
<td>‘easy’</td>
<td>helpo-n</td>
<td>lihta-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>mahdollinen</td>
<td>võimalik</td>
<td>‘possible’</td>
<td>mahdollise-n</td>
<td>võimaliku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>mahdollis-ta</td>
<td>võimalikku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>tärkeä</td>
<td>tähtis</td>
<td>‘important’</td>
<td>tärkeä-n</td>
<td>tähtsa-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tärkeä-ä</td>
<td>tähtsa-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>samanlainen</td>
<td>samasugune</td>
<td>‘similar’</td>
<td>samanlaise-n</td>
<td>samasuguse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>samanlais-ta</td>
<td>samasugus-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>hyvä</td>
<td>hea</td>
<td>‘good’</td>
<td>hyvä-n</td>
<td>hea-d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>hauska</td>
<td>tore</td>
<td>‘nice’</td>
<td>hauska-n</td>
<td>toreda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hauska-a</td>
<td>toreda-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>kiinnostava</td>
<td>huvitav</td>
<td>‘interesting’</td>
<td>kiinnostava-n</td>
<td>huvitava-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>erilainen</td>
<td>erinev</td>
<td>‘different’</td>
<td>erilaise-n</td>
<td>erineva-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>erilais-ta</td>
<td>erineva-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>selvä</td>
<td>selge</td>
<td>‘clear’</td>
<td>selvä-n</td>
<td>selge-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>selvä-ä</td>
<td>selge-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>huono</td>
<td>halb</td>
<td>‘bad’</td>
<td>huono-n</td>
<td>halva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>huono-a</td>
<td>halba</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>kiva</td>
<td>tore</td>
<td>‘nice’</td>
<td>kiva-n</td>
<td>toreda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kiva-a</td>
<td>toreda-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>ystävällinen</td>
<td>sõbralik</td>
<td>‘friendly’</td>
<td>ystävällise-n</td>
<td>sõbraliku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ystävällis-tä</td>
<td>sõbralikku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>kaunis</td>
<td>ilus</td>
<td>‘beautiful’</td>
<td>kaunii-n</td>
<td>ilusa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>kaunis-ta</td>
<td>ilusa-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>terveellinen</td>
<td>tervislik</td>
<td>‘healthy’</td>
<td>terveellise-n</td>
<td>tervisliku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>terveellis-ta</td>
<td>tervislikku</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>nuori</td>
<td>noor</td>
<td>‘young’</td>
<td>nuore-n</td>
<td>noore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>nuor-ta</td>
<td>noor-t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>tavallinen</td>
<td>tavaline</td>
<td>‘normal’</td>
<td>tavallise-n</td>
<td>tavalise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tavallis-ta</td>
<td>tavallis-t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yet, this leads us to the conclusion that there is obviously not that much phonological similarity between Finnish and Estonian adjectives as between Finnish and Estonian nouns (at least not as far as the adjectives in table 38 are concerned). The evidence of negative influence of L1 morphology in the use of objects and subjects is thus not being undermined by the lack of evidence of negative influence of L1 morphology in the Estonian learners’ use of partitive predicatives, but it is rather the lack of phonological similarity between Finnish and Estonian adjectives that prevents negative influence of L1 morphology from occurring. Thus, this conspicuous difference between objects and subjects on the one hand and predicatives on the other confirms the relationship between phonological similarity and the likelihood of morphological L1 influence.

With respect to the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular adjective predicatives, this eliminates the possibility that the partitive singular underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus are merely seemingly nominative singular predicatives. As a consequence of the lack of phonological similarity between Finnish nominative singular and Estonian partitive adjective forms, possible influence of L1 morphosyntax is thus not likely to be obscured by negative influence of L1 morphology. Yet, the Estonian learners’ use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular can rather be assumed to reflect negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. The error examples (124) and (125) were selected to further support this. Comparison of the Finnish and Estonian target-like sentences illustrates that nearly all words and inflectional endings are in both languages phonologically similar and that the only morphosyntactic difference resides in the case-marking of the predicatives. Thus, error examples such as (124) and (125) certainly confirm that the frequent replacement of nominative singular by partitive singular predicatives in the Estonian learner corpus is due to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax.

(124)  
Error example (C1 component of the Estonian learner corpus)  
Onko kirjoittaminen *tärkeä toisen kielen omaksumisessa?  
be-3Sg-Particle writing(Nom.Sg) important(Nom.Sg) L2-Gen.Sg acquiring-Iness.Sg
Target-like sentence

Onko kirjoittaminen tärkeää toisen kielen omaksumisessa?
be-3Sg-Particle writing(Nom.Sg) important-Part.Sg L2-Gen.Sg acquiring-Iness.Sg

Estonian equivalent sentence

Kas kirjutamine on tähtis teise keele omandamises?
particle writing(Nom.Sg) be-3Sg important(Nom.Sg) L2-Gen.Sg acquiring-Iness.Sg

'Is writing important in second language acquisition?'

(125)

Error example  (B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus)

On *olennainen osata puhua vieraita kieliä.
be-3Sg essential(Nom.Sg) be able-Inf1 speak-Inf1 foreign language-Part.Pl

Target-like sentence

On olennaista osata puhua vieraita kieliä.
be-3Sg essential-Part.Sg be able-Inf1 speak-Inf1 foreign language-Part.Pl

Estonian equivalent sentence

On oluline osata rääkida võõrkeeli.
be-3Sg essential(Nom.Sg) to be able-Inf1 speak-Inf1 foreign language-Part.Pl

'It is essential to be able to speak foreign languages.'

A particularly interesting error example is provided in (126). In this error example, two coordinated nominative singular predicatives were used to refer to an abstract (zero) referent. When comparing the error example and its Estonian equivalent sentence, it may initially seem that the Finnish adjective huvittava ('funny') finds its exact equivalent in the phonologically similar Estonian adjective huvitav. The latter however has the additional meaning of 'interesting', which could even be considered its more prominent meaning. In contrast, this meaning is in Finnish expressed by the phonologically different adjective mieleenkiintoinen. On the basis of the context, it cannot be determined beyond
doubt which of the meanings of the Estonian adjective the learner intended to use. Taking into consideration that the error example was taken from a writing sample in which the scenery and nature on the Estonian island of Hiiumaa were being described, it could however very well have be that 'interesting' indeed was the intended meaning of the adjective. Error example (126) thus possibly reflects both negative influence of L1 semantics and negative influence of L1 morphosyntax.

(126)  
*B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus*

Error example  
Siellä oli *kaunis ja *huvittava.
there be-Past.3Sg nice(Nom.Sg) and funny(Nom.Sg)

Target-like 1  
Siellä oli kaunista ja mielenkiintoista.
there be-Past.3Sg nice-Part.Sg and interesting-Part.Sg

'Over there it was nice and interesting.'

Target-like 2  
Siellä oli kaunista ja huvittavaa.
there be-Past.3Sg nice-Part.Sg and funny-Part.Sg

'Over there it was nice and funny.'

Estonian equiv.  
Seal oli ilus ja huvitav.
there be-Past.3Sg nice(Nom.Sg) and funny(Nom.Sg)

'Over there it was nice and funny (~ interesting).'

*The underuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative*

First and foremost, the underuse of partitive plural as the case of the predicative was shown to be common in all learner corpora. In addition, rapidly decreasing partitive plural underuse errors also appeared to be a shared feature of all learner corpora. The Estonian learner corpus particularly stood out in this respect, as its partitive plural underuse error rates ultimately decreased from 90 at the A2 level to zero at the C2 level. On the whole, the Dutch learner corpus showed significantly lower partitive plural underuse error rates than both of the remaining learner corpora, while there were no significant differences between these two
(i.e. the Estonian and the German learner corpus). More detailed analyses nevertheless clearly distinguished between the Estonian learner corpus and the remaining learner corpora: Substitutions of partitive plural by nominative singular predicatives were found to be significantly more common in the German and Dutch learner corpus than in the Estonian learner corpus, and substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural significantly more common in the Estonian learner corpus than in the other learner corpora. In the following sections, it will be addressed what these striking differences between the Estonian learner corpus and the remaining learner corpora imply.

**Substitutions of partitive plural by nominative singular**

Nominative singular predicatives were in the German and Dutch learner corpora significantly more frequently used to replace partitive plural predicatives than in the Estonian learner corpus. In addition, these underuse errors significantly decreased when proceeding from the B1 to the B2 component of the German learner corpus and from the A2 to the B1 component of the Dutch learner corpus, while no significant differences between the successive proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus could be indicated.

As nominative singular is the basic non-inflected word form, these findings suggest that the German and Dutch learners initially tended to leave the predicative uninflected for the sake of simplification. Although this could straightforwardly be interpreted as reflecting a strategy to avoid predicative case-marking, it probably should neither be interpreted as such, nor as an indication of the learners not yet having sufficiently mastered the principles of plural predicative case-marking. The learners might namely also have ended up with lots of uninflected predicatives because they simply forgot to inflect them or did not manage to inflect them because they were not able to address morphosyntactic, morphological and semantic issues all at the same time. They might for instance not yet (sufficiently) have known how to form partitive plural forms, simply have copied basic dictionary forms of novel and infrequent words, or have had their attention shifted away from morphosyntax for the sake of other aspects of the writing process. As for the replacements of partitive plural by nominative singular exemplified in (127) and (128), all of these reasons could potentially have caused the learners to rely on basic uninflected predicatives. When attributing the German and Dutch learners’ frequent use of nominative singular instead of partitive plural predicatives at the lower proficiency levels to a trade-off between
limited L2 knowledge and attentional resources, this would neatly tie in with the finding that the uninflected predicatives gradually started to occur on a less frequent basis when L2 knowledge broadened and became more established.

(127) \textit{A2 component of the Dutch learner corpus}

\textbf{Error example} \textit{Suomalaiset eivät ole kovin *erilainen.}
\begin{quote}
Finn-Nom.Pl be-Neg.3Pl different(\text{Nom.Sg})
\end{quote}

\textbf{Target-like} \textit{Suomalaiset eivät ole kovin erilaisia.}
\begin{quote}
Finn-Nom.Pl be-Neg.3Pl different-\text{Part.Pl}
\end{quote}

’Finns are not that much different.’

(128) \textit{B1 component of the German learner corpus}

\textbf{Error example} \textit{He ovat *työtön.}
\begin{quote}
they(Nom) be-3Pl jobless(\text{Nom.Sg})
\end{quote}

\textbf{Target-like} \textit{He ovat työttömiä.}
\begin{quote}
they(Nom) be-3Pl jobless-\text{Part.Pl}
\end{quote}

’They are jobless.’

Notwithstanding the above reasoning, the use of nominative singular instead of partitive plural predicatives may also possibly have been caused by negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. That is, the beginning German and Dutch learners of Finnish could also frequently have used basic, uninflected predicatives, because they relied on the copula construction of their L1s. As a matter of fact, the predicative remains in both German and Dutch always in its basic form, regardless of whether the copula subject is a singular or plural form. The basic predicative form of a noun or adjective is in both languages identical to its dictionary form. Like in Finnish, the German basic form is referred to as nominative singular. The basic form of Dutch nouns and adjectives is not always referred to as such (due to the lack of case endings in modern Dutch). The contrast between Finnish predicative case-marking and German/Dutch predicative case-marking is exemplified in (129). Comparing the German and Dutch copula
constructions in (a) and (b), it is shown that the predicative form remains the same basic form whether referring to a singular or to a plural copula subject.

(129a)  
**Comparison example**

**Finnish**  
Hän on työtön.

**German**  
Sie/er ist arbeitslos.

**Dutch**  
Zij/hij is werkloos.

s/he(Nom) be-3Sg  jobless(Nom.Sg)

'She/he is jobless.'

(129b)  
**Comparison example**

**Finnish**  
He ovat työttömiä.

**German**  
Sie sind arbeitslos.

**Dutch**  
Ze zijn werkloos.

they(Nom) be-3Pl  jobless(Part.Pl)

'They are jobless.'

**Substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural**

In contrast to the preference for uninflected predicatives in the German and Dutch learner corpora, the Estonian learner corpus was found to be mainly characterized by substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural predicatives. Although such substitutions were to a certain extent represented in all learner corpora, the Estonian learner corpus contained significantly more partitive predicative underuse errors in which partitive plural was replaced by nominative plural than the German and the Dutch learner corpus. When proceeding from the B1 to the B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus, substitutions of partitive plural by nominative plural were furthermore found to become significantly less frequent.

Complementing the frequent replacement of partitive plural by nominative plural predicatives in the Estonian learner corpus not only with the significant
differences between the Estonian and the other learner corpora but also with the
case-marking of plural predicatives in Estonian, this already provides sufficient
evidence to claim that the underuse errors of this type reflect clear negative
influence of Estonian morphosyntax. As was outlined, plural copula subjects
namely always take nominative plural predicatives in Estonian. Nevertheless, the
error examples (130)-(133) still provide additional evidence confirming the
existence of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax in the Estonian learner
corpus.

(130) B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example Naapurit ovat *nuoret ja *miellyttävät.

Target-like 1 Naapurit ovat nuoria ja miellyttäviä.
neighbour-Nom.Pl be-3Pl young-Part.Pl and nice-Part.Pl

Target-like 2 Naapurit ovat nuoria ja mukavia.
neighbour-Nom.Pl be-3Pl young-Part.Pl and nice-Part.Pl

Estonian equiv. Naabrid on noored ja meeldivad.

'The neighbours are young and nice.'

In error example (130), the Finnish adjective *miellyttävä ('nice') was favoured
over its more commonly used synonym mukava. The phonological similarity
between the adjective *miellyttävä, its Estonian equivalent meeldiv and the related
high-frequent Estonian verb meeldida ('to like'; pitää in Finnish) may have given
rise to the preference for this less frequent adjective. The simultaneous occurrence
of this probable influence of L1 semantics and the Estonian-like use of the
nominative plural predicatives offers consolidating evidence for attributing the
partitive plural predicative underuse errors to negative influence of L1
morphosyntax.

Another kind of supporting evidence is reflected in error example (131) in
which the predicate *on presumably represents the third person plural of the
Estonian verb *olla ('to be') rather than the third person singular of the same
Finnish verb. Comparing the erroneous sentence and its Estonian equivalent, it is
likely that not only the Estonian third person plural predicate *on* but also the overall L1 morphosyntactic pattern was used as the blueprint for the Finnish sentence.

(131) \[ B2 \text{ component of the Estonian learner corpus} \]

*Error example* *Monet kirjat on aika vanhat.*


*Target-like* Monet kirjat ovat aika vanhoja.


*Estonian equiv.* Mõned raamatud on õige vanad.


'Many books are rather old.'

(132) \[ B2 \text{ component of the Estonian learner corpus} \]

*Error example* *Minusta olit näyttelijät hyvät.*

I-Elat be-3Pl actor-Nom.Pl good-Nom.Pl

*Target-like* Minusta näyttelijät olivat hyviä.

I-Elat actor-Nom.Pl be-3Pl good-Part.Pl

*Estonian equiv.* Minu arvates olid näitlejad head.

I-Gen according-Post be-3Pl actor-Nom.Pl good-Nom.Pl

'I think the actors were good.'

Even more indisputable, the third person plural past predicate *olivat* in (132) was replaced by the non-existing form *olit*, for which the resemblance to the Estonian third person plural past predicate *olid* is obvious. The verb-final consonant /d/ was merely changed into /t/, probably either because the Estonian /d/ is pronounced [t]-like or because the predicate was adapted to the Finnish orthography. Also the word order follows a word order pattern that is not accepted in Finnish but typical of Estonian sentences as (132). The L1-influenced predicates in (130)-(132) and the word order pattern in (132) confirm the
assumption that it was indeed negative influence of L1 morphosyntax that prompted the erroneous nominative plural predicatives to occur.

In error example (133), the nominative plural demonstrative pronoun ne ('those') was substituted by the self-created form ned, which closely resembles the Estonian equivalent pronoun need. The shortening of the geminated vowel /e/ may indicate that the Finnish and Estonian nominative plural forms were blended. Moreover, the predicate on appears also in this error example to represent the Estonian third person plural rather than the Finnish third person singular form of the verb olla ('to be'). Error example (133) thus also provides compelling evidence suggesting the occurrence of negative L1 influence in the Estonian learner corpus.

(133) B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus

Error example *Mutta ned on yhteiset ongelmat.
but those-Nom.Pl be-3Sg common-Nom.Pl problem-Nom.Pl

Target-like Mutta ne ovat yhteisiä ongelmia.
but those-Nom.Pl be-3Sg common-Part.Pl problem-Part.Pl

Estonian equiv. Aga need on ühised probleemid.

'But those are common problems.'

On the whole, the use of nominative plural instead of partitive plural in the Estonian learner corpora can clearly be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. Furthermore, the significant difference concerning errors of this type as found to exist between the B1 and the B2 component of the Estonian learner corpus provides some evidence suggesting an inverse relation between the occurrence of this kind of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax and L2 proficiency. Although in the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus nominative plural predicatives were also substantially less frequently used to replace partitive plural predicatives than in its A2 component, these proficiency components were not found to significantly differ.
5.4.6 Conclusions and summary of the main findings

Partitive predicatives were found to be significantly overrepresented in the Dutch learner corpus and significantly underrepresented in the Estonian learner corpus. Partitive predicative-requiring contexts appeared to occur to a similar extent in the Estonian learner corpus as in the reference corpus but significantly more frequently in the German and Dutch learner corpora than in the native Finnish reference corpus. Both categories were furthermore virtually absent from the A2 component of the Estonian learner corpus as well as significantly underrepresented in the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus.

As for the occurrence of partitive predicative errors, the Estonian learner corpus showed significantly lower partitive predicative overuse error rates than the German and Dutch learner corpora, and the Dutch learner corpus significantly lower partitive predicative underuse error rates than the Estonian and German learner corpora. All learner corpora were furthermore characterized by significantly higher partitive predicative under- than overuse error rates, but the Estonian learner corpus even showed a virtual lack of partitive predicative overuse errors.

Detailed analyses on the use of partitive singular as the case of the predicative revealed that all learner corpora reflected the frequent tendency to erroneously refer to bounded entities by a partitive singular predicative and to unbounded entities by a nominative singular predicative. In these respects, the error patterns observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora nevertheless seemed to reflect a more arbitrary choice between nominative and partitive singular than the Estonian learner corpus. Unbounded entities were namely more frequently referred to by nominative singular predicatives than the other way around, which can be motivated on the basis of the fact that in Estonian, nominative would have been used in both cases.

To conclude, the analyses indicated conspicuous differences between the use of partitive predicatives by the learners of Finnish from non-related L1 backgrounds (German and Dutch) and the learners from a closely related L1 background (Estonian). The German and Dutch learners often used non-inflected predicatives instead of partitive predicatives and seemed to treat the nominative-partitive predicative case alternation in a more arbitrary way than the Estonian learners in that they basically just as often referred to singular divisible subjects with nominative singular predicatives and to singular indivisible subjects with partitive singular predicatives. In contrast, the lack of the predicative case
alternation in Estonian seemed to have played an important role in Estonian learners’ use of partitive predicatives, resulting in instances of both positive L1 influence (i.e. the virtual lack of partitive predicative overuse errors) and negative L1 influence (i.e. the frequent substitution of partitive plural by nominative plural predicatives). With respect to the Estonian learners’ partitive predicative underuse errors in which nominative plural was used instead of partitive plural, these errors were found to ultimately decrease with increasing L2 proficiency, providing additional evidence for the existence of an inverse relationship between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency. As for all learner corpora, the use of nominative singular instead of partitive singular appeared to represent an underuse error category that persisted even with gains in L2 proficiency. Although this seems to suggest that the TL rules for singular predicative case-marking are not transparent, this is not necessarily the case. Rather, it has on the basis of several detailed analyses been argued that the fact that clear boundaries between divisible and indivisible Finnish nouns cannot be indicated has had an important role in this.

### 5.5 The over- and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative: An overall comparison

Starting out from the general frequency analysis on the Estonian, German and Dutch learners’ use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives, each of the three applications was thoroughly analyzed and discussed in its own right. The purpose of the overall comparison of the error rates provided in figure 37 is to bridge the gap between the learners’ use of partitive objects, partitive subjects and predicatives as the final step of the analyses. Figure 37 shows the overall partitive object, subject and predicative over- and underuse error rates that were separately discussed in section 5.2.2, section 5.3.2 and section 5.4.2, supplemented by mean partitive over- and underuse error rates (μ) for rapid comparisons.
Figure 37 illustrates that the partitive object, subject and predicative overuse error rates extracted from the Estonian learner corpus are comparably low but that the partitive underuse error rates are three times as high for subjects as for objects and for predicatives as for subjects. In contrast, the German and Dutch learner corpora are characterized by relatively high partitive subject and predicative overuse error rates. The German learner corpus shows a substantially higher partitive underuse error rate for predicatives than for both objects and subjects, while there are no striking differences between the partitive underuse error rates observed from the Dutch learner corpus.

Statistical testing revealed no significant differences between the different overuse error rates extracted from the Estonian learner corpus, while its partitive subject underuse error rate was found to be significantly higher than its partitive object underuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 120.20; p = .0001$) and significantly lower than its partitive predicative underuse error rate ($G^2 (1) = 66.87; p = .0001$). Considering the overuse error rates calculated for the German learner corpus, these appeared to be significantly higher for subjects than for both objects ($G^2 (1) = 178.40; p = .0001$) and predicatives ($G^2 (1) = 40.16; p = .0001$), but also higher.
for predicatives than for objects ($G^2 (1) = 25.84; \ p = .0001$). In addition, the underuse error rates were found to be significantly higher for predicatives than for both objects ($G^2 (1) = 75.01; \ p = .0001$) and subjects ($G^2 (1) = 32.25; \ p = .0001$), while there was no significant difference between its overall partitive object and partitive subject underuse error rates ($G^2 (1) = 0.15$). As for overuse as well as underuse, the Dutch learner corpus showed significantly lower error rates for objects than for both subjects (overuse: $G^2 (1) = 73.08; \ p = .0001$; underuse $G^2 (1) = 16.30; \ p = .0001$) and predicatives ($G^2 (1) = 55.01; \ p = .0001$ and $G^2 (1) = 44.41; \ p = .0001$), but no significant differences between its subject and predicative error rates (overuse: $G^2 (1) = 3.52$; underuse: $G^2 (1) = 0.93$).

Although the above comparison suggests that the learners are not particularly struggling with partitive objects as they are with partitive subjects or predicatives, this is not the conclusion to be drawn. There are several reasons on the basis of which the relatively low partitive object error rates could be explained. First, all learner corpora contained substantially more partitive objects than partitive subjects and predicatives. Since the error rates either relate to the total number of partitive case-marked objects, subjects or predicatives (overuse errors) or to the number of PRCs (underuse errors), the differences in the total number of occurrences have likely affected the error rates to a certain extent. That is, the smaller the total number of occurrences, the more impact an increase in the number of errors has on the error rates.

Second, and probably most important, there is obviously a link between the learners’ use of partitive objects and the verb predicates they put to use. When learners have the opportunity to carefully formulate and reformulate their ideas while writing beyond time limits, this may lead to the preference for certain verbs (or verb structures) and the avoidance of others, providing that the learners have sufficient knowledge of the target language at their disposal. Alternatively, if the knowledge of the target language is still very limited, learners likely resort to verbs that are repeatedly used in the classroom or in the educational materials. As a task-based effect, the verbs and structures of the task description are moreover probably repeatedly used throughout the texts the learners have written. The point to make is that the learner corpora probably contain a limited repertory of transitive verbs, of which inherently irresultative verbs such as *puhua* (‘to speak’), *opiskella* (‘to study’), *oppia* (‘to learn’), *rakastaa* (‘to love’) and *osata* (‘to be able’) cover a large proportion of the transitive verb predicates. Because such frequent irresultative verbs are often used in input targeted at beginning learners, learners do not have to put much effort into memorizing the verbs themselves in the first
place and their co-occurrence with partitive objects in the second. Deliberate or unavoidable reliance on a set of basic, frequent verbs could in this way have had considerable influence on the occurrence of partitive object over- and underuse errors.

Rather than a way of indicating the relative difficulty that learners exhibit in using partitive objects, subjects and predicatives, the overall comparison should be seen as a concise summary and a reflection of the main findings of the learner corpus study as a whole. It is then with this in mind that figure 37 can and should be interpreted. With respect to the Estonian learner corpus, the low partitive object error rates reflect that the Estonian learners generally successfully managed to build on L1-L2 similarities in the case of partitive objects, the relatively higher partitive subject underuse error rate indicates negative L1 influence resulting from the differences between Finnish and Estonian existential sentences (one existential sentence type in Finnish versus two in Estonian) and the again higher partitive predicative underuse error rate the lack of the nominative-partitive predicative case alternation in Estonian. Moreover, the Estonian learner corpus clearly distinguishes itself from the remaining learner corpora with its virtual lack of all three types of partitive overuse errors. Against the background of the preceding, the German and Dutch learners' partitive subject overuse error rates involve the use of the partitive as the case of the basic subject and the partitive underuse error rates the tendencies to often rely on uninflected forms or to overgeneralize target language rules. In the chapter following upon this overall comparison, the general patterns reflected by the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other will be discussed in the light of their general theoretical and pedagogical implications.


6 General discussion and conclusions

In the previous chapter, the findings of the learner corpus study were presented and interpreted in the light of the presence versus absence of inter- and intralingual similarity relations. A summary of the main findings concerning the Estonian, German and Dutch learners' use of partitive objects was provided in 5.2.6, the findings concerning the learners' use of partitive subjects were summarized in 5.3.6 and those pertaining to the use of partitive predicatives in 5.4.6. The overall comparison with respect to the learners' over- and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative (5.5.) can be used as a comprehensive and concise review of the overall findings of the learner corpus study. This chapter discusses the general theoretical implications of the study as well as its limitations and implications for teaching, and brings this dissertation to an end by providing directions for future research.

6.1 Prior linguistic knowledge matters

On a general basis, the outcomes of the present study are very much in line with the findings of Ringbom's research project on Finnish and Swedish learners of English as a foreign language (cf. Ringbom, 1987: 80–109; 2007: 41–51). Within this research project, Ringbom analyzed the English Matriculation Examination tests of a large number of Finnish secondary school pupils having either a Finnish or Swedish L1 background, in order to explore the difference between the learning of a related or non-related target language. Particularly at the lower proficiency levels, the Swedish-speaking Finns not only also outscored them on the examinations in that they received substantially higher grades but they appeared to produce fewer errors than their Finnish-speaking peers. The Finnish-speaking learners of English for example often tended to omit articles or prepositions because Finnish, unlike English and Swedish, does not have articles and generally uses case-endings to express spatial relations. Altogether, the research findings indicated that the Swedish-speaking learners had a clear advantage over their Finnish-speaking peers, indicating that the Swedish-speaking learners could from the outset rely on their L1 for the essential facilitation of foreign language learning, while the Finnish-speaking learners had far less relevant L1 knowledge at their disposal. By speaking in terms of foreign language success, Ringbom emphasizes the positive effects of having a closely related L1
(e.g. Swedish) rather than a non-related L1 (e.g. Finnish) on the learning of English as a foreign language.

As to the scope and design of the present study, its difference in relation to Ringbom’s research is that it focuses on Finnish rather than on English as a target language and that it has a specific target language phenomenon (i.e. the use of the Finnish partitive case) as the object of study. Consequently, the Estonian learners represent the learners from a closely related L1 background and the German and Dutch learners the learners from a non-related L1 background. Because there are both similarities and differences between the use of the partitive case in Finnish and Estonian, the partitive has neither its equivalent in German nor in Dutch, and the use of the partitive case is a complex TL phenomenon, the main focus of the present study was not on foreign language success but on the effect of the presence versus lack of inter- and intralingual similarity relations.

The first research question to be addressed was whether the general patterns concerning the use, overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative observed from the Estonian learner corpus were similar or different from those extracted from the German and Dutch learner corpora, and how potential similarities and differences could be accounted for in terms of the use of prior linguistic knowledge of the L1 and the target language. In order to address this question, the use of partitive objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives was investigated by gradually proceeding from a general frequency analysis and general frequency-error analyses toward more detailed analyses of the error patterns. The detailed analyses were needed to confirm the findings indicated by the more general analyses, to elaborate on the general analyses or to seek for underlying patterns from a contrastive point of view. In this respect, it turned out that certain patterns of overuse and underuse that seemed to be fairly similar in the light of the general analyses sometimes even turned out to be essentially different and motivated by a different underlying source when zooming in on them further and in a more detailed fashion.

On the whole, conspicuous differences were found to exist between the Estonian learner corpus on the one hand and the German and Dutch learner corpora on the other. These differences were not only found to reside in the lack versus presence of certain error types but also in the nature of the error patterns. The general patterns were mostly interpreted in the light of the presence versus lack of L1-L2 similarity relations. The outcomes of the study hereby provided several valuable insights into the phenomenon of L1 influence. In the first place, the outcomes of the study confirmed the existence of morphosyntactic L1
influence. Although the existence of both morphological and syntactic L1 influence have long been doubted, several studies conducted throughout the past few decades have indicated that L1 influence does not merely manifest itself at the lexical and phonological level but also at the morphological and syntactic level. In line with these studies (cf. 3.3.1 for morphology and 3.3.2 for syntax), the present study provided compelling evidence for the existence and importance of morphosyntactic L1 influence, for a target language typologically different from and other than English. This can be considered an important addition to the study of L1 influence, which has so far strongly been biased toward English as a target language. As already pointed out by Kaivapalu and Martin (2007), insights into the nature of L1 influence can substantially be deepened and strengthened, if also involving target languages that are unrelated to and typologically different from English and other widely spoken Indo-European languages such as Spanish, German and French.

In addition, the study has shown that positive and negative influence of L1 morphosyntax generally tend to occur simultaneously. Positive influence of L1 morphosyntax was primarily found to be manifested in the relative lack of partitive overuse errors and partitive object underuse errors observed from the Estonian learner corpus, and negative influence of L1 morphosyntax in specific error patterns produced by the Estonian learners. The claim made by Jarvis and Pavlenko (2010: 182) that L1 influence often ends up being both negative and positive at the same time, given that one-to-one correspondences between languages rarely occur, has not been supported by many other studies so far. One of the exceptions is Kaivapalu's (2005) study on plural inflection by learners of Finnish from a related L1 background (Estonian) and a non-related L1 background (i.e. Russian). From this study, evidence for the occurrence of positive influence of L1 morphology was found in that the native speakers of Estonian showed a significant lack of inflectional errors as compared to the native speakers of Russian. At the same time, positive and negative influence of L1 morphology were reflected in that the Estonian learners made fewer errors with respect to nouns that are similarly inflected in Finnish and Estonian than with respect to nouns that are differently inflected in both languages.

Within the study of L1 influence, the simultaneous occurrence of positive and negative L1 influence has probably mainly remained under-researched (and consequently not been evidenced) because of the common research designs. Negative L1 influence attracts the focus when conducting error analyses, while positive L1 influence can only successfully been investigated when considering
groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds (i.e. L1s that are closely related and non-related to the target language) or when the target language phenomenon to be investigated simulates a continuum ranging from crosslinguistic similarity toward crosslinguistic difference. The present study and Kaivapalu's study meet both of these conditions. First, they both involve Estonian learners of Finnish as well as learners of Finnish from L1 backgrounds that are not related to the target language. The comparison between these groups of learners, which differ in terms of both the genetic and typological distance to the target language, already provided the opportunity to determine whether the Estonian learners showed positive L1 influence in their usage of the Finnish language. In addition, the varying degree of L1-L2 similarity with respect to the target language phenomenon under investigation is represented in the varying degree of similarity between the case-marking of objects, existential subjects and predicatives in Finnish and Estonian as far as the present study is concerned, and in the varying degree of similarity between the inflection of Finnish and Estonian nouns as far as Kaivapalu's study is concerned. Moreover, the advantage of a morphologically rich source and target language combined is that at least the overt transfer of L1 morphosyntactic patterns and L1 morphology (surface transfer) and the overlap between L1 and L2 morphosyntactic patterns is fairly uncontroversial and cannot easily be overlooked.

Interestingly, positive and negative L1 influence were not only found to simultaneously occur at the same linguistic level, that is the morphosyntactic level, but positive influence of L1 morphosyntax was also revealed to occur alongside with negative influence of L1 morphology. The simultaneous occurrence of positive influence of L1 morphosyntax and negative influence of L1 morphology was found to be manifested in the Estonian learners' use of nominative-like objects and subjects instead of partitive case-marked ones, particularly at the initial proficiency levels. This study has referred to 'nominative-like' objects and subjects because the overlap with Estonian partitive forms was claimed to be the cause of these seemingly nominatives to occur. Evidence for the simultaneous occurrence of L1 influence at the morphosyntactic and morphological level has not been reported in previous studies on L1 influence, in any case for the reason that the study of L1 influence has largely been biased toward the morphologically poor English language as a target language. The logical consequence of having a morphologically poor language as the target language is that the overt transfer of L1 morphology is simply out of question because of the lack of morphological endings. Yet, the finding that the
positive influence of L1 morphosyntax reflected in the Estonian learners' use of partitive objects and partitive subjects appeared to a certain extent to be obscured by negative influence of L1 morphology is rather language-specific. It can only take place in the case of morphologically rich languages in the first place, but additionally, the overlap between the nominative forms of certain Finnish nouns and the partitive forms of their Estonian equivalents is a particular and specific asymmetry between Finnish and Estonian. If the morpho-phonological shortening of Estonian nouns (cf. 2.4.1) would not have caused a coincidental overlap between Finnish nominative and Estonian partitive forms, the effect would naturally not have been able to take place. This is however not to say that positive influence of L1 morphosyntax and negative influence of L1 morphology may not simultaneously occur when morphologically rich source and target languages other than Estonian and Finnish are involved. The specific asymmetric conditions to be fulfilled however indicate why similar effects have, to my knowledge, not been reported elsewhere in the literature.

The finding that the nature of L1 influence and the extent to which it occurs can be determined by a complex interplay between morphosyntactic and morphological knowledge of the L1 underlines the importance of approaching L1 influence as a cognitive, subjective phenomenon (cf. R. Ellis, 2008: 400). Although from a linguistic point of view it is necessary to draw boundaries between the different linguistic subsystems, this might easily lead to the assumption that each linguistic subsystem tends to operate separately. The simultaneous occurrence of positive influence of L1 morphosyntax and negative influence of L1 morphology however shows that this is by no means the case and sheds important light on the cognitive nature of the phenomenon of L1 influence. When characterizing L1 influence as a complex phenomenon emerging from the L1-L2 similarity relations learners assume or perceive to exist, it is yet obvious that this is a cognitive process that is not restricted by the boundaries of linguistic subsystems. Learners do not seek for similarity relations within the boundaries of a linguistic subsystem. On their quest to facilitate learning, they are naturally not bothered with the boundaries of linguistic subsystems. They rather seek for similarity relations wherever they can find them (cf. Ringbom & Jarvis, 2009). As a consequence, L1 influence can simultaneously occur across all linguistic subsystems and so it may be the case that the one instance of L1 influence is being obscured by the other.

In short, the general patterns observed from the Estonian learner corpus were thus mostly found to reflect positive influence of L1 morphosyntax, negative
influence of L1 morphosyntax and negative influence of L1 morphology, emerging as a result of the similarities and differences between the case-marking of objects, existential subjects and predicatives in Finnish and Estonian. While the presence of L1-L2 similarities provides opportunities for L1 influence to occur, the relative lack of L1-L2 similarities provides neither opportunities for positive L1 influence to occur nor opportunities for negative L1 influence to occur. As a consequence, the general patterns observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora are strikingly different from those observed from the Estonian learner corpus in that they reflect evidence of restrictive and elaborative simplification rather than of L1 influence. Restrictive simplification was observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora in the high-frequent occurrence of basic, non-inflected objects and predicatives at the lower proficiency levels. As non-inflected objects and predicatives are identical to the nominative singular forms that can be retrieved from the dictionary, it seemed to be the case that beginning German and Dutch learners of Finnish often simply forgot to add the case endings or omitted them for the sake of simplification. The overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject was interpreted as an instance of elaborative simplification (also termed overgeneralization; cf. 3.4). Unlike their Estonian peers, German and Dutch learners were obviously not intuitively aware of the morphosyntactic restrictions on partitive subjects, which caused them to overgeneralize the partitive as the case of the subject to non-existential sentences rather than to merely restrict its use to existential sentences.

The finding that the Estonian learner corpus showed a considerable amount of positive L1 influence and negative L1 influence but the other learner corpora failed to show any L1 influence (apart from the very few cases of deep transfer detected in the category of remaining partitive object underuse errors; cf. 5.2.5) can very well be linked with the literature and was also expected on the basis of the presence versus absence of L1-L2 similarities concerning the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives. As reflected in the Estonian learner corpus, Ringbom (2007: 8) claimed that the closer related the L1 and the target language are, the more L1-L2 similarities can be found and the larger the likelihood for L1 influence to occur. Conversely, and as reflected in the German and Dutch learner corpora, Corder (1983: 88) added to this that in the case of languages that are not related and typologically different from the target language, the lack of L1-L2 similarities leads to a lack of positive L1 influence rather than to the occurrence of negative L1 influence.
What is however not described or at least not explicitly stated in the literature is that the lack of L1 influence in the learner language produced by learners from L1 backgrounds unrelated to and typologically different from the target language may manifest itself in the form of simplification of TL rules and structures. Depending on the presence versus absence of L1-L2 similarities, it was namely either L1 influence or (restrictive or elaborative) simplification that was found to predominantly occur. Yet, as the Estonian learner corpus is particularly characterized by L1 influence and not by simplification, while the remaining learner corpora are characterized by simplification and not by L1 influence, this suggests that both phenomena inhibit each other, at least when it comes to the use of the partitive case in Finnish learner language. Ringbom (2007: 9) just briefly touches upon the consequences of the lack of L1-L2 similarities upon which learners from unrelated and typologically different L1 backgrounds can draw by claiming that these groups of learners have to exert immense effort to even acquire the most elementary target language grammar rules and vocabulary.

In the case of Finnish as a target language, the relation between the lack of L1-L2 similarities and the manifestation of restrictive simplification in target language performance can be addressed by drawing the line with Skehan's *Limited Attentional Capacity Model*, according to which it is assumed that an imperfectly learned target language poses a large burden on a learner's limited attentional capacity (cf. Skehan, 1998). This is because learners only have a limited amount of target language knowledge available, which cannot yet be rapidly accessed. German and Dutch learners basically have nothing more to rely on than their limited knowledge of the target language. At the same time, they are faced with a target language which is not only typologically different from their L1 but also has a rich morphological system as well as a lexicon that largely consists of etymologically unrelated words. While using the Finnish language for example in writing, they have to attend to all of these aspects of the language simultaneously.

Elaborating on this, Ringbom (1987: 80–109; 2007: 41–51) reported that Finnish-speaking learners of English were often inclined to omit articles and prepositions because of the fact that Finnish does not have articles and uses case-endings to express spatial relations on a far more regular basis than prepositions. This means that Finnish learners possibly not automatically consider articles and prepositions as important meaning-bearing features while first starting to use English, or that they at least allocate more attention to features such as content words than to articles and prepositions. The German and Dutch learners' tendency
to sometimes leave out the case-endings of the object and the predicative can probably be motivated in a similar way, that is in that the etymologically different vocabulary and the learners' endeavor to convey the message takes so much of their attentional capacity that there are not enough resources left for the morphological case-endings that have to be attached to the content words. Although Dutch does not have morphological case-endings and German attaches them to articles rather than to nouns and adjectives, this is not necessarily to say that they do not yet recognize the importance of the Finnish case-endings in expressing grammatical relations, but simply that they prioritize lexical items (and for example word order which is of significant importance in their L1s) for the time being. This might just be the most efficient way for beginning learners from unrelated and typologically different L1 backgrounds to cope with a target language which is as morphologically rich as Finnish. There is in the end no meaning without words, so if the content words are present and put in the correct word order, communication is not necessarily significantly hindered if certain case-endings are being left out.

The finding that the German and Dutch learner corpora exhibited elaborative simplification (while the Estonian learner corpus did not) can also be argued to reflect that German and Dutch learners cannot draw upon their L1 knowledge when it comes to the use of the Finnish partitive case, but have to manage with their limited knowledge of the target language and the target language rules they are presented with. The learners' lack of intuitive knowledge on the use of the partitive case and its morphosyntactic restrictions combined with the fact that some of the rules concerning the different case alternations are clearer than others logically causes them to form their own approximations of the rules for partitive case-marking (which may often turn out to be overgeneralizations) by combining the TL knowledge they have at their disposal with their own understanding of the partitive case. Yet, the overgeneralization of principles for partitive case-marking basically results from the learners' attempts to simultaneously facilitate and come to grips with the use of partitive case. This is perfectly in line with Meisel (1980), who views simplification as a bidirectional process, both serving the purpose of dealing with limited knowledge of target language grammar as well as practising, trying out and elaborating on it.

The findings just described suggest that, at least in the case of the use of the Finnish partitive case, it is indeed a matter of prior linguistic knowledge that determines whether either L1 influence or simplification effects are likely to predominantly manifest themselves. Both obviously serve the common purpose
of facilitating the use of the target language but the difference between them resides in that the former is triggered by the presence and the latter by the absence of L1-L2 similarities. The presence of L1-L2 similarities namely provides the opportunity to rely on L1 knowledge, while the absence of L1-L2 similarities rules implies that the limited knowledge of the target language is what remains to build upon. The phenomena of L1 influence and simplification can therefore be likened to the same side of a slightly different coin, essentially similar in that both depend on prior linguistic knowledge but essentially different in that linguistic resources drawn from between the L1 and the target language are concerned in the one case and linguistic resources from within the target language in the other.

6.2 The relationship between L2 proficiency and prior linguistic knowledge

Another main issue to be explored was the relationship between manifestations of L1 influence and the extent to which these are affected by L2 proficiency. In the present study, L2 proficiency was operationalized by using the proficiency scales (A1-C2) of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). This proficiency measure was chosen for various reasons, which have thoroughly been outlined in the method section (cf. 4.3.3). To put it succinctly, the reasoning for using the CEFR proficiency levels as a measure of L2 proficiency was three-fold. From a practical point of view, it was firstly an advantage that the learner corpus data could be aligned to the CEFR proficiency levels after the materials had been collected. Otherwise the texts contained in the ICLFI corpus could not have been used. Moreover, the use of the CEFR proficiency levels enables more reliable comparisons between groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds as compared to many other proficiency measures. As to indirect proficiency measures based on the amount of foreign language instruction (which was the initial proficiency measure of the ICLFI) or foreign language exposure in a more general sense, it is for example highly probable that such measures put learners whose L1 is genetically related and typologically similar to the target language at an advantage, which naturally makes it an inappropriate proficiency measure for investigating the influence of the L1 background on foreign language learning. Given that the CEFR levels become more and more used in SLA research as a well-defined and grounded proficiency measure, their use furthermore enables comparisons to recent and future studies in the field.
Like in other studies, the selected research materials were aligned to the CEFR proficiency levels by means of a holistic rating procedure, according to which each writing sample was independently rated. The rating procedure was performed by two experienced raters working at the institute for the Finnish National Certificate of Language Proficiency Examination. The proficiency rating scales (cf. Appendix B) were purely based on communicative competence and not on linguistic accuracy. Although one can never be completely sure that the raters have not at all let themselves be influenced by the degree of linguistic accuracy of the texts, such a circularity effect on the proficiency ratings has at least been minimized to the largest possible extent (cf. Alanen, Huhta & Tarnanen, 2010; Martin, Mustonen, Reiman & Seilonen, 2010). This means that when the amount of negative L1 influence (manifested in the form of specific error patterns) would be found to decrease when proceeding from the lower to the upper CEFR proficiency levels, this would indeed indicate an inverse relationship between L2 proficiency and negative L1 influence rather than an indication that the raters scored the texts with the lowest accuracy levels as written at the lowest, and those with the highest level of accuracy as written at the highest proficiency levels.

As has been reported by Jarvis (2000), previous studies on the relationship between L1 influence and L2 proficiency have often yielded contradictory findings. This he claimed to be mostly due to a general lack of methodological rigor and to the varying ways in which L2 proficiency has been operationalized. In order to capture the general tendencies observed in the literature, Jarvis (2000: 246–247) presented a list of six alternative ways in which L2 proficiency has been found to interact with L1 influence, ranging from endless fluctuations to linear and non-linear decrease and increase with gains in L2 proficiency. As the studies on which this list was based varied with respect to the linguistic subsystems that were investigated, narrowing down to the morphosyntactic level revealed that negative influence of L1 morphosyntax generally decreases with increasing L2 proficiency. Odlin (1989: 133–134) also came to the conclusion that negative L1 influence ultimately decreases with gains in L2 proficiency. Supporting evidence for this claim can for example be found from Taylor (1975), Dommergues and Lane (1976) and Jansen, Lalleman and Muysken (1981). Taylor (1975) found that Spanish learners of English produced significantly more L1-induced translation errors at the elementary than at the intermediate level. Dommergues and Lane (1976) studied the interaction between L2 proficiency and L1 morphosyntax by administering a grammatically judgment task to French learners of English of which the TOEFL scores were known and could be used as
a measure of L2 proficiency. From the study, it was revealed that those students with lower TOEFL scores were more likely to accept ungrammatical sentences than their more proficient peers. In their study on the acquisition of word order by Turkish and Moroccan learners of Dutch, Jansen et al. (1981) found that both groups of learners showed reliance on L1 word order patterns at the lower proficiency levels but not at the upper proficiency levels.

The outcomes of the current study also suggest an inverse relation between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency. This was both the case for instances of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax and for the negative influence of L1 morphology that was revealed to partly override the positive influence of L1 morphosyntax evidenced in the case of partitive objects and subjects. With respect to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax, evidence suggesting an inverse relation with L2 proficiency was particularly found in the Estonian learners’ underuse of the partitive as the case of existential subjects and predicatives. A quarter of the partitive subject underuse errors in which partitive plural existential subjects were replaced by nominative plural existential subjects could with absolute certainty be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax. These were the partitive plural underuse errors in which a nominative plural e-subject was accompanied by the third person plural form of the verb *olla* (‘to be’) rather than by its third person singular form. Although these underuse errors only occurred at the lower proficiency levels and they clearly decreased with increasing L2 proficiency, this did not turn out to be a significant tendency. With respect to the partitive predicative underuse errors in which the Estonian learners used nominative plural instead of partitive plural, these errors appeared to ultimately and significantly decrease with increasing L2 proficiency, providing more compelling evidence for the existence of an inverse relationship between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency than the former case concerning the underuse of partitive plural as the case of the subject.

Negative influence of L1 morphology was manifested in the Estonian learners' replacement of partitive objects and partitive subjects by nominative-like object and subject forms. The term 'nominative-like' was hereby used because of the overlap between the erroneous object and subject forms and their Estonian partitive equivalents. In these cases, the partitive was apparently meant to be used as the case of the object and the existential subject but the coincidental overlap between the Finnish nominative and Estonian partitive forms triggered the use of nominative-like forms instead. As the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus contained significantly fewer errors of this type that could with absolute
certainty be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphology than its A2 component, this does not only suggest an inverse relationship between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency but also shows that this instance of negative influence of L1 morphology does not persist until the later stages of foreign language development. A similar instance of negative influence of L1 morphology was observed within the Estonian learners’ underuse of the partitive as the case of the existential subject. Nearly half of the underuse errors in which nominative singular-like subjects were used to replace partitive singular subject could with absolute certainty be attributed to negative influence of L1 morphology. Perfectly in line with the negative influence of L1 morphology reflected in the Estonian learners’ use of partitive objects, the B1 component of the Estonian learner corpus contained significantly fewer errors of this type than its A2 component.

Considering the interaction between L2 proficiency and the above mentioned instances of negative influence of L1 morphosyntax and morphology, it is conspicuous that statistical evidence was not always found to be present or did not turn out to be particularly strong. Still, it cannot be ignored that the general tendencies are in the direction of an inverse relation between L2 proficiency and negative L1 influence. The weak statistical support can partially be accounted for in terms of the relatively small number of errors involved in each of the error categories. In addition, the structure of the Estonian learner corpus is not perfectly suitable for exploring the relation between L1 influence and L2 proficiency in the sense that its C1 and C2 components are substantially smaller than its lower proficiency components. If the C1 and C2 proficiency components had not represented a mere 12% of the overall Estonian learner corpus but each proficiency component represented approximately 20% of the overall corpus data, this would have provided a much stronger basis for investigating the interaction between L1 influence and L2 proficiency. It was however beyond the scope of the present study to compile more texts written at the upper proficiency levels. As the present findings already indicate that negative L1 influence is affected by L2 proficiency, further research could be conducted in an effort to come to more solid conclusions. Bearing the complex underlying nature of the phenomenon of L1 influence in mind, it should then however not be neglected that potential interactions between L2 proficiency and negative L1 influence could possibly be affected or obscured by other interacting variables that should ideally be controlled for. In the case of the relationship between L2 proficiency and negative influence of L1 morphology, the phonological similarity between L1
and L2 noun stems should for example undoubtedly be among these, for in section 5.2.4 of this study as well as in Kaivapalu's 2005 study on plural nominal inflection this has been acknowledged as acting as a trigger for negative influence of L1 morphology to occur.

Nonetheless, in terms of the use of prior linguistic knowledge it can very well be motivated why the negative L1 influence in the Estonian learner corpus seems to decrease with increasing L2 proficiency. Building upon the claim that negative L1 influence emerges from the L1-L2 similarities learners erroneously assume to exist, the extent and nature of the learners' prior linguistic knowledge plays a decisive role in this. The higher the proficiency level, the more target language knowledge learners likely have at their disposal and the lower the proficiency level, the more limited and the less easily accessible their target language knowledge will be. At the initial stages of foreign language learning, learners have not that much target language knowledge at their disposal upon which they can build, which naturally leads them to often rely on their (relevant) L1 knowledge. Beginning learners from a very closely related L1 background hereby often show the tendency to rely on the overgeneralized equivalence hypothesis that the target language and their L1 basically work in the same way (cf. Ringbom, 1987: 63; 2007: 5–6). When L2 proficiency increases and knowledge of the target language becomes more and more established, learners become increasingly aware of differences between their L1 and the target language. As a result, they are likely to establish more accurate L1-L2 similarity hypotheses, which in turn leads to a decrease of negative L1 influence (cf. Ringbom, 2007: 91–93).

While the Estonian learner corpus showed several instances of L1 influence on the basis of which an inverse relationship between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency was suggested, the German and Dutch learner corpora were found to be characterized by the simplification of the target language and overgeneralization of target language rules rather than by L1 influence. Simplification was primarily manifested in the German and Dutch learners' tendency to resort to basic non-inflected objects and predicatives instead of using partitive case-marked ones. Both the use of non-inflected objects and non-inflected predicatives was significantly less frequently observed from the higher than from the lower proficiency components of the German and Dutch learner corpora. Each successive proficiency component of the German learner contained significantly fewer substitutions of partitive objects by non-inflected objects, and partitive predicatives were in the B2 component of the German learner corpus.
significantly less frequently replaced by non-inflected predicatives than in its B1 component. As for both the use of erroneous non-inflected objects and predicatives, the Dutch learner corpus showed a significant decrease when proceeding from the A2 to the B1 proficiency level. The most important overgeneralization effect represented in the German and Dutch learner corpora was found in the use of the partitive as the case of the basic non-alternating subject. Overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject appeared to be significantly more common in the B1 than in the B2 component of the German learner corpus, while the Dutch learner corpus showed a substantial (but non-significant) decrease across its proficiency components. On the whole, the findings thus indicate a more obvious inverse relation between L2 proficiency and simplification than between L2 proficiency and overgeneralization.

Because the German and Dutch learner corpora did not contain texts that could be aligned with the upper proficiency levels (i.e. C1 and C2), the relation between L2 proficiency and tendencies to simplify the target language or overgeneralize target language rules could not fully be explored. It could be for this reason that the relation between L2 proficiency and overgeneralization of the partitive as the case of the basic subject did not turn out to be particularly strong. Taking into consideration that Meriläinen (2010) found that in the case of Finnish learners of English, syntactic errors specific to this group of learners turned out to be considerably more persistent than the lexical errors they produced, it could very well have been the case that the overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic subject would even more substantially have gone down when proceeding from the B2 to the upper levels of proficiency. Given that students of Finnish as a foreign language from unrelated L1 backgrounds such as German and Dutch do not generally reach proficiency levels exceeding the B2 level after having received three years of foreign language instruction at the university-level, this is however not an issue that can easily be tested, not even in further research.

Notwithstanding this, the inverse relation between negative L1 influence and L2 proficiency observed from the Estonian learner corpus seems to a certain extent to be mirrored by the relation between the simplification and overgeneralization effects and L2 proficiency observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora. This can, again, very well be motivated when taking into account that L1 influence and intralingual influence are often characterized as two alternative manifestations of reliance on prior linguistic knowledge (cf. 3.4), serving the common purpose of facilitating the foreign language learning process. The difference between the two resides in the type of prior linguistic knowledge
they involve. Unlike L1 influence, intralingual influence merely draws upon knowledge from within the target language. As has just been argued that the more target language knowledge is gathered, the more established it becomes and the more likely it is that learners manage to formulate accurate similarity hypotheses, this would also explain why overgeneralization, as an instance of intralingual influence, tends to occur to a lesser extent when L2 proficiency increases.

As for the simplification effects observed from the lowest proficiency components of the German and Dutch learner corpora in the form of reliance on non-inflected objects and predicatives, these can be linked with Schuman (1986) and Meisel (1980), who also claimed that restrictive simplification predominantly occurs during the initial stages of foreign language learning. When drawing the connection to the allocation of a learner’s limited attentional resources also in this respect, the inverse relation between L2 proficiency and restrictive simplification can be explained in that more proficient learners are to a lesser extent burdened by their limited attentional capacity than beginning learners (cf. De Bot, 2000) because their knowledge of the target language becomes more rapidly accessible with use and the different aspects of the language therefore gradually demand less explicit attention.

Yet, the findings from the present study provided evidence suggesting an inverse relationship between L2 proficiency and negative L1 influence as well as between L2 proficiency and simplification. Taking into account that L2 proficiency depends on target language knowledge and the phenomena in question on the use of prior linguistic knowledge from either between the target language and the learners’ L1 background or from within the target language, such a relationship between the use of prior linguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency may hardly come as a surprise. It nonetheless offers additional insights into the dynamic nature of learner language and the way in which the learners’ use of the partitive case may change over time. Moreover, it underlines what is also implied by Jarvis (2000: 246–247) and Odlin (1989: 133–134), namely that negative L1 influence is affected by L2 proficiency in less than six different ways.

### 6.3 Constraints versus limitations

Notwithstanding that strikingly similar patterns concerning the use, overuse and underuse of the partitive as the case of the object, subject and predicative were observed from the German and Dutch learner corpus, the error patterns were often
more strongly manifested in the German than in the Dutch learner corpus. As a consequence, the German learner corpus was occasionally found to be characterized by significantly higher error rates than the Dutch learner corpus. These significant differences were not addressed in the sections in which the error patterns were interpreted in the light of the presence versus lack of L1-L2 similarity relations (5.2.5, 5.3.5 and 5.4.5), for the mere reason that they have to be addressed in another way. Although it cannot with certainty be determined, the differences between the German and Dutch learner corpora can probably partly be attributed to task- and teaching-based variables. In these respects, the German and Dutch learner corpora do probably not represent entirely comparable data sets. Corpus comparability could not be completely guaranteed because of the structure of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish from which the research materials were selected.

As described in the method section, the texts contained in the ICLFI are homework assignments written during Finnish language courses that differed in content, focus and level of difficulty. Yet, the corpus involves different genres and text types, of which descriptive essays constitute the majority. Other text types such as letters, narratives, summaries and argumentative texts are nonetheless also represented. The structure of the subset of the German ICLFI subcorpus selected as the materials of the current study slightly differs from that of the subset selected from the Dutch subcorpus in that the German learner corpus contains considerably more argumentative texts than the Dutch selection. The latter mainly consist of descriptive essays as well as of some letters and narratives. It is in fact not that much of a problem that the learner corpora are not entirely comparable, because they are fairly large in size. However, there could certainly be a connection between the overrepresentation of argumentative texts in the German learner corpus and its relatively high error rates. In other words, the task type could have affected the overall accuracy of the texts contained in the German learner corpus in several related respects, which are outlined below.

To start with, the task description of the argumentative texts could have been formulated in such a way that its communicative purpose occupied the central position. The message to be conveyed could consequently have been underlined as the most important function of the writing assignment. Alternatively, and even more likely, the complexity of the task could have influenced the overall accuracy of the texts. Writing an argumentative essay is obviously more challenging than writing a descriptive essay. Particularly at the lower levels of L2 proficiency, when linguistic knowledge of the target language is still limited, it can be
extremely demanding to effectively and logically argue for or against a certain statement or position. In 3.5.4, it was already stated that foreign language writing is a cognitively demanding process (Schoonen et al., 2009), which burdens attentional capacity for example in that vocabulary, morphosyntax and all other linguistic subsystems simultaneously compete for a learner's limited attentional resources (Kellogg, 1996). Yet, the added complexity of an argumentative writing task resides in that the organization of the arguments requires attention as well. In terms of Skehan's limited attentional capacity model (1998) which also presupposes competition between fluency, accuracy and complexity, the task complexity could thus draw necessary cognitive resources away from learners’ ability to regulate writing accuracy.

In addition to the task-based differences between the structure of the German and the structure of the Dutch learner corpus, differences in teaching or teaching methods might also partly account for the differences in the error rates. The difficulty in this is that for none of the universities from which the texts of the German learners were collected, information on language methods and the like could be gathered. Nevertheless, the texts contained in the Dutch learner corpus were all collected from one and the same Finnish language department in the Netherlands, for which the following information on the teaching method was available: The majority of the writing assignments contained in the Dutch learner corpus are aligned with the language method Kuulostaa hyvältä - Sounds good (Ahonen, 2005), the language method used during the first year of study. Texts were however also collected during the second and third year of study. All throughout the first three years of study, writing courses are part of the language curriculum, so that much specific attention is paid to the development of foreign language writing skills. Students are required to hand in writing assignments every week, which are discussed in class after they have been supplied with feedback and overt corrections. The focus of this feedback is primarily on grammatical accuracy and its function is to provide the students with insight into the grammatical features of the target language. The object, subject and predicative case alternations hereby receive much attention. Throughout the writing courses, the students are guided into the direction of formulating accurate grammar rules concerning the use of partitives, and when necessary, additional rules of thumb are formulated to make the case alternations more transparent.

Although explicit correction has to at least a certain extent been found to have a positive effect on morphosyntactic development (cf. Sharwood-Smith, 2004), it can be doubted whether it always has only a positive function. According to
Haastrup (1991: 341), it may namely also work out in such a way that accuracy comes at the expense of fluency or that overt correction provokes anxiety for errors to occur. Whether this indeed turns out to be the case naturally also depends on learner-dependent variables such as personality, motivation and aptitude. Additionally, the teacher is obligated to encourage the students and to help them benefit from overt corrections and feedback.

Without being able to compare the teaching and language methods at the German and Dutch universities, it cannot be determined to what extent differences in the focus of teaching have indeed influenced the use of the partitive case in the German and Dutch learner corpora. On the basis of the above discussion of the writing courses at the Finnish department in the Netherlands, it can merely be concluded that grammatical transparency and accuracy are continuously emphasized during the writing courses. As a consequence, the Dutch learners of Finnish as a foreign language might have attached a good deal of importance to the grammatical accuracy of their texts. This does not take anything away from the fact that grammar probably occupies an important position at the German universities as well, since this is not only the traditional way of teaching Finnish as a foreign language at the university-level but also an approach that the language itself may call for, particularly when teaching students with a background in linguistics. To conclude, the overrepresentation of argumentative texts in the German learner corpus possibly more strongly accounts for the fact that the error rates observed from the German learner corpus occasionally turn out to be significantly higher than those observed from the Dutch learner corpus than the strong focus on grammatical accuracy that seems to be reflected in the Dutch learner corpus. It can however not be ruled out that differences in the focus of teaching may also have had an effect.

The issues just discussed explain why significant differences between the essentially similar partitive over- and underuse patterns extracted from the German and Dutch learner corpora were occasionally found to exist, and they also indicate limitations of the data selected as the materials of the present study in a more general sense. What hereby needs to be recalled is the third component of Jarvis’ (2000) unified methodological framework (cf. 4.1.1). Based on the constraints on L1 influence listed by R. Ellis (2008: 396–397), this component involves a set of task-based, learner-based and linguistic variables that should ideally be controlled for in experimental studies on L1 influence. When conducting learner corpus research instead of experimental research, there is no need to rigorously control for learner-based variables. These can assumed to be
neutralized since far larger data sets are involved than in experimental research. Individual differences in personality and socio-economic background are therefore for example likely to be averaged out. As the Estonian, German and Dutch learner corpora all consist of texts written by university students of Finnish as a foreign language, it can furthermore be assumed that the three corpora represent texts written by students from the same age range that generally have an aptitude for learning foreign languages as well as motivation to do so. In contrast, the differences between the structure of the German and Dutch learner corpora already indicated that task-based variables should ideally be controlled for in learner corpus research as much as in experimental research.

In line with this, it should be added that task-based variables go beyond text type and genre alone. Even if the Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish would just have contained texts of one and the same text type and genre (e.g. descriptive, non-fictional essays) or comparable amounts of different text types, differences in the text topics could possibly still have led to subtle differences between the corpora. The lower proficiency components of the Estonian learner corpus for example contain a large number of texts in which the students describe their own house. Providing that partitive subjects may occur in existential and possessive sentences (e.g. Minulla ei ole televisiota - Part.Sg 'I don't have tv.'), these writing assignments might to a certain extent have contributed to the high-frequent occurrence of partitive subjects in the Estonian learner corpus. This nevertheless implies that also within learner corpora, certain topics may particularly trigger partitives to occur while others may not. Yet, if and only if each ICLFI subcorpus would have been collected on the basis of the same set of writing assignments, task-based effects between the learner corpora were entirely ruled out and nothing more than the natural topic variability within corpora would have remained. When working with existing learner corpora rather than with specifically designed ones, this however often yields minor limitations of the data that have to be taken into consideration.

### 6.4 Pedagogical matters and considerations

One of the issues raised in the introduction was how the present learner corpus study could contribute to the teaching of the use of the partitive case to university students of Finnish as a foreign language. In the preceding chapter, similarities and differences between the Estonian, German and Dutch learners' use of partitive
objects, partitive subjects and partitive predicatives were extensively analyzed. The Estonian learners were often found to substantially benefit from the similarities between Finnish and Estonian partitive case-marking, while their German and Dutch peers mainly had to draw upon their limited knowledge of the target language. While the partitive over- and underuse error patterns extracted from the Estonian learner corpus were mostly found to be due to negative influence of L1 morphosyntax or L1 morphology, the error patterns observed from the German and Dutch learner corpora often reflected overgeneralization and simplification. Tendencies to leave the object and predicative uninflected, overuse of the partitive as the case of the non-existential subject, the confusion between existential and non-existential sentences as well as overuse of the partitive as the case of the predicative in negated sentences for instance suggested that the use of the partitive case, but also the Finnish morphosyntax in a more general sense, particularly presented the beginning German and Dutch learners with a challenge.

After all, the German and Dutch learners' major stumbling blocks concerning the use of the partitive case may not come as much of a surprise for teachers of Finnish as a foreign language. Experienced Finnish language teachers could possibly have listed most of these themselves. However, the added value of the present study is that it provided us with objective empirical evidence. Mainly because of the focus on similarities and differences between the object, subject and predicative case alternations, it has been implicitly pointed out that the use of the partitive case particularly remains a struggle for learners of Finnish from non-related L1 backgrounds because of the fact that it is a semantically conditioned case that covers a wide range of functions and that cannot be torn apart from the case alternations of the object, subject and predicative. The lack of L1 competence of the Finnish language makes it difficult for learners to grasp the Finnish way of expressing aspect, divisibility and definiteness. Additionally, the asymmetries between the case alternations are prone to confuse the learners. If there were a magic recipe for overcoming all of this at once, teachers would already have written it down. Rather than arguing in favour of the best way of presenting the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in grammars and language methods (see section 3.4 for the most important pedagogical considerations Finnish language teachers already have come up with), the pedagogical contribution proposed here is therefore to link up the learners' use of prior linguistic knowledge with teaching, both for learners from L1 backgrounds related and unrelated to Finnish.
In this respect, the principal conclusion to be drawn from the present study is that Estonian university students of Finnish as a foreign language call for a different approach than students from typologically different and non-related L1 backgrounds. This is not to say that the teaching approach itself should be essentially different, but rather that its perspective should be different. I would namely argue that, concerning the use of the partitive case, explicit contrastive grammar instruction would be beneficial for students of Finnish from both related and non-related L1 backgrounds. As for Estonian university students of Finnish as a foreign language, the main focus should nevertheless be on L1-L2 similarity relations, while learners from non-related L1 backgrounds such as German and Dutch would particularly benefit from the highlighting of similarities and differences from within the target language. Although primarily emphasizing L1-L2 similarity relations in the case of Estonian learners and intralingual similarity relations in the case of learners from non-related L1 backgrounds, the approach is similar in that it concerns the use of relevant prior linguistic knowledge in either case, be it of the first language or the target language.

While Krashen (1982) does for example not argue in favour of explicit grammar instruction, the usefulness of this conventional way of foreign language teaching was already motivated in section 3.5.5 by drawing the connection between the gathering of explicit, conscious knowledge of the target language and the formation of implicit intuitive knowledge. By adopting Hulstijn's viewpoint (2002; 2007), it was argued that the development of implicit knowledge of the target language simultaneously takes place while gathering, using and applying explicit grammar rules. Explicit grammar instruction by means of pedagogical grammars is therefore more than merely the conventional way of teaching foreign languages: It may also be an efficient way of contributing to the development of intuitive knowledge of the target language, particularly for university students who have generally developed highly effective learning strategies.

Building upon the usefulness of explicit grammar instruction, section 3.5.6 served to explain how explicit contrastive instruction may lead to increased metalinguistic knowledge and awareness. According to Jessner (1999), additional insight into the structural features of the target language helps learners to use the relevant prior linguistic knowledge they have at their disposal in a more accurate way, so that they are likely to establish more adequate similarity relations. Also Ringbom (2007) claims that learners would be served by instruction on how to use contrastive similarity relations as a facilitating strategy. Yet, the purpose of explicit contrastive instruction is to assist learners to gain more insight into the
structure of the target language. By making target language rules and patterns more transparent, initial stumbling blocks could probably even be turned into stepping stones.

Having justified the use of explicit contrastive instruction from a general point of view, its actual content and realization calls for more detailed attention when it comes to the use of the Finnish partitive case. As for the Estonian learners of Finnish, there are two main points on which the contrastive teaching of the partitive needs to be based. First, the similarities between Finnish and Estonian naturally call for a crosslinguistic approach. Without disregarding the L1-L2 similarities between the case-marking of objects, existential subjects and predicatives in Finnish and Estonian, the L1-L2 differences should nevertheless be highlighted. This is in line with Ringbom (2007), who argues that the more similar both languages are, the more useful it is to emphasize L1-L2 differences rather than similarities. L1-L2 contrastive materials targeted at Estonian learners of Finnish could for example be based on sections 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 of this dissertation, in which the L1-L2 differences concerning the aspectual object case alternation, the morphosyntactic structure of existential sentences and the case-marking of predicatives are discussed. Estonian students could for example very well be presented with a list of mental verbs and verbs of perception that are (quasi-)resultative in Finnish but irresultative in Estonian. The purpose of such a list would not only be to make learners aware of the fact that there are not only similarities but also differences between the case-marking of objects in Finnish and Estonian, but also to serve as a resource for facilitation or to be consulted in cases of doubt and uncertainty.

With respect to the teaching of the partitive to learners from non-related L1 backgrounds, the approach should rather be intralingual than crosslinguistic. Pointing out the similarities and differences between the case alternations (cf. 2.3.6) undoubtedly needs to form an important part of such intralingual contrastive instruction. If all three case alternations would be contrastively presented and the teacher would address how each of the alternations stands out for its own unique reasons, neither of the case alternations would receive a more prominent place than the other. This is in line with Geber (1993) and Forsman Svensson (1994), who argue that the predicative case alternation deserves more attention than it presently receives. Existing language methods namely primarily concentrate on the object case alternation, which is generally considered one of the most challenging aspects of Finnish grammar.
In line with the findings of the current study and the pedagogical considerations in 3.4, the scope of intralingual contrastive instruction targeted at learners of Finnish from non-related L1 backgrounds definitely needs to be extended beyond the mere contrasting of the different case alternations. Particularly concerning the use of partitive subjects, learners from non-related L1 backgrounds would be much helped by presenting them with the contrasts between basic non-existential subjects and existential subjects as well as with the morphosyntactic and semantic contrasts between basic intransitive sentences and existential sentences (see also Hämäläinen, 1994 and Siitonen, 1996). Emphasizing the contrasts between existential and non-existential sentence types could definitely help learners to recognize the morphosyntactic restrictions of partitive subjects resulting in a possible decrease of the overuse of the partitive as the case of the basic (non-existential) subject.

As outlined in 3.5.6, contrastive instruction may take the form of teacher-fronted grammar lessons but this does not necessarily have to be the case. According to Lightbown and Spada (2000), contrastive information should either be presented briefly and visually by the teacher or it should be incorporated in specifically prepared materials from which the learners have to observe the contrastive information and similarity relations themselves. Ammar, Lightbown and Spada (2010) add that teachers can also guide their students to discover similarity relations themselves by deliberately leading them in a certain direction. All these kinds of activities could be applied while teaching the use of the partitive case from a contrastive point of view. Instead of specifically prepared materials, materials selected from the International Corpus of Learner Finnish could also be utilized to illuminate similarities and differences between the object, subject and predicative case alternations. Learner corpus data could also be used in the foreign language classroom by providing materials containing negative evidence and by offering the students the opportunity to discover this evidence themselves. Examples of typical mistakes and patterns of overuse and underuse could in this way very well be used in teaching and educational materials (cf. Nesselhauf, 2005).

Although explicit contrastive instruction on the use of the partitive case could certainly be beneficial, it also has a number of pitfalls. Importantly, the use of the partitive case is nothing more than a part of Finnish grammar. If it would receive considerably more attention than the other aspects of Finnish grammar, it could probably also receive too much emphasis. Particularly for students who are afraid of making mistakes, the emphasis on the use of the partitive case could possibly
make them anxious in case they would still not manage to get to the bottom of the problem of partitive case-marking. Hämäläinen (1994) has already mentioned that learners of Finnish often become increasingly less certain about the use of the partitive as they become more proficient in Finnish. This is not because they are not familiar with the general principles for partitive case-marking but because they often desperately seek to understand the use of the partitive in all of its nuances.

The general principles for partitive case-marking can very well be emphasized by means of pedagogic grammars and explicit contrastive instruction, since they are mostly simple and short rules of thumb. This is also the way explicit grammar rules should ideally be formulated taking into account that a human's working memory capacity is limited (Hulstijn, 2002). Because merely a limited amount of information can be controlled at a time, even the application of short, simple and transparent explicitly learned grammar rules puts strong demands on a learner's working memory (Hulstijn, 2007). Nevertheless, although the general principles concerning the case-marking of objects, existential subjects and predicatives are fairly simple, they do not entirely capture the language-specific way in which Finnish expresses aspect, divisibility and definiteness, nor the use of the partitive case in all of its nuances. Explicit contrastive instruction would therefore primarily be useful for making the general principles for partitive case-marking more transparent to beginning learners of Finnish. Yet, learners can very well use insights into these general principles as stepping stones to build and rely on. For the rest, it is rather a case of putting the partitive to use than of getting straight to the bottom of it. Just like making the road by walking it, one will then learn how to use the partitive case by using it.

6.5 Concluding remarks and directions for future research

This research has highlighted the use of the partitive case in learners of Finnish from related and non-related L1 backgrounds on the basis of data selected from the International Corpus of Learner Finnish. The integrated contrastive analysis of these learner data has provided valuable insights into the nature of Finnish learner language as well as into the differences in the use of a closely related or non-related target language that can however be developed in future research.

The selected learner corpus data naturally provide opportunities for further discovery of Estonian, German and Dutch learners’ use of Finnish language phenomena other than the use of the partitive case. Beyond this specific target
language phenomenon, the focus of research could for example be extended toward verb relocations or the use of grammatical cases in general. Such follow-up research would however be subject to certain limitations concerning the comparability of the different learner corpora that already have been mentioned in the preceding.

Although the same would presumably hold true when elaborating on the use of the partitive case by adding additional groups of learners, it would definitely be of interest to expand the analyses toward learners of Finnish from L1 backgrounds other than the currently involved ones. Chinese as an L1 could for example be added as an analytic language having very few grammatical inflections, Hungarian as a Finno-Ugric language that is far less closely related to Finnish than Estonian, and Russian because of the similarities and differences between Russian verbal aspect and the Finnish aspectual object case alternation. Recalling that the Estonian subcorpus of the ICLFI comprises a large number of (presently excluded) texts written by Russian-speaking Estonians, comparisons could potentially also be drawn between Russian-speaking learners of Finnish living in Russia and Russian-speaking learners of Finnish living in Estonia. As the latter group generally has learned Estonian as an L2, the interaction between the use of prior linguistic knowledge of the L1, the L2 and the target language could then be explored.

Yet, the learner corpus data involved in the present study were quasi-longitudinal in nature as the International Corpus of Learner Finnish contains data gathered at a single or a couple of points in time from learners at different levels of L2 proficiency. It would therefore be a fruitful addition to the present study to track a group of specifically recruited Estonian, German and Dutch students of Finnish as a foreign language over a longer period of time, from the beginning of their studies at university-level onward. Instead of collecting all kinds of written homework assignments, these students would then be provided with the same writing tasks and guidelines. The produced texts would subsequently be aligned to the proficiency scales of the CEFR on the basis of the same holistic rating procedure also used for the purposes of the present study. The relationship between the CEFR proficiency scales and the amount of foreign language instruction received at university-level could hereby then also be analyzed in the light of differences between learners from related and unrelated L1 backgrounds. The fact that the German and Dutch learner corpora analyzed in the course of the present study did not contain any texts exceeding the B2 proficiency level (while
the Estonian learner corpus did) namely suggests that Estonian learners have to put less effort into reaching higher levels of L2 proficiency.

Genuinely longitudinal learner data would not only allow a further exploration of the relation between the use of prior linguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency but also a broadening of scope towards the individual developmental patterns and individual differences within the groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds. Combining the general tendencies concerning the Estonian, German and Dutch learners' use of the partitive case observed from the present study with the analysis of patterns of variability in developmental data could be a crucial step towards a deeper understanding of the nature of L1 influence. Both the dynamic perspective on SLA (cf. Spoelman & Verspoor, 2010, for a longitudinal case-study on morphosyntactic complexity and accuracy in a Dutch learner of Finnish as a foreign language) and the complex dynamic phenomenon of L1 influence could be brought together within such a research design.

Be it on the basis of quasi-longitudinal or longitudinal data, the morphologically rich Finnish language certainly calls for additional research on the role of prior linguistic knowledge in target language performance. As it has been evidenced all the way throughout this dissertation, the analysis of Finnish learner language contributes to the understanding of the way in which learners get along with their limited attentional and linguistic resources. The advantage of having a morphologically rich language as the target language is that it becomes particularly manifest that a learner's quest to facilitate is not restricted by the linguistic boundaries of phonological, morphological and morphosyntactic systems. Returning to the use of the partitive case, the Estonian learners' TL performances appeared to show interactions between influence of L1 morphosyntax and L1 morphology. The similarities, differences and asymmetries between the closely related Finnish and Estonian languages yet pave the way for a bidirectional investigation on the use of the partitive case in which Estonian learners of Finnish as well as Finnish learners of Estonian would be involved.

Whether such a bidirectional investigation should better be conducted as a learner corpus study or within an experimental design is a question that cannot be provided with a straightforward answer. As particularly with respect to the complex nature of the phenomenon of L1 influence, this is just like approaching from the one or from the other side. The advantage of experimental research is that the study can be designed in such a way that the variables that are assumed to mostly affect the likelihood of L1 influence can all be controlled for or taken into account. When conducting learner corpus research in the same way as has been
done in the present study, this may however lead to detect L1 influence effects that were not expected beforehand, for the very reason that the fascinating ways in which languages interact in the mind cannot fully be predicted. In that sense, learner corpus research has a somewhat more explorative character. May this dissertation have served the exploration of how prior linguistic knowledge matters and to what extent its use can make a difference between groups of learners from different L1 backgrounds.
7 General summary

Finnish belongs to the Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric language family and is particularly well-known for its rich and complex morphology. Consisting of fifteen cases, the Finnish case system also comprises a partitive case, which is a typical case characterizing the Finnic languages. Developed from a separative locative into a grammatical case, the partitive is in modern Finnish primarily used as one of the cases of the object, the existential subject and the predicative. More specifically, partitive case-marked noun phrases are associated with that side of the object, subject and predicative case alternations that expresses aspectual unboundedness, quantitative unboundedness and negative polarity. Since all of these three factors affect Finnish object case-marking, partitive objects are licensed in aspectually unbounded and/or negated sentences, and in the case of quantitatively unbounded objects. The case-marking of the existential subject differs from that of the object in that it is only affected by negative polarity and quantitatively boundedness. As quantitative boundedness is the only factor affecting predicative case-marking, Finnish predicatives take partitive case when they refer to quantitatively unbounded copula subjects or when the predicatives themselves are quantitatively unbounded.

Probably as a consequence of the facts that the Finnish object, subject and predicative case alternations differ in certain respects and clear-cut grammar rules can, besides, not always be formulated, the use of the partitive case remains a constant struggle for learners of Finnish. Yet, because the closely related Estonian language also has a partitive case and its use is essentially similar as in Finnish (there are only slight differences when it comes to the aspectual object case alternation, existential sentence types and the lack of an Estonian equivalent to the Finnish nominative-partitive predicative case alternation), this study investigated the use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives in writings produced by Estonian, German and Dutch learners of Finnish as a foreign language. By comparing groups of learners from L1 back-grounds that are either closely related or non-related to the Finnish target language, it was aimed to explore how the presence vs. lack of relevant prior linguistic knowledge -and the presence vs. lack of inter- and intralingual similarities upon which learners potentially draw- was reflected in their writings. Furthermore, the study aimed to identify the learners’ major stumbling blocks in the use of the Finnish partitive case, be it those stumbling blocks shared by all groups of learners or those encountered by specific groups of learners. Yet, the purpose of the study was not
only to gain valuable insights into the phenomena of L1 influence and intralingual influence but also to draw pedagogical implications based upon the findings.

Research materials were selected from the Estonian, German and Dutch subcorpora of the *International Corpus of Learner Finnish* (ICLFI), aligned to the CEFR levels of proficiency (A1-C2), and analyzed on the basis of a set of combined error-frequency analyses, involving partitive over- and underuse errors, relative frequencies of occurrence and partitive-requiring contexts (PRCs).

As has been discussed, comparisons between the different learner corpora indicated several instances of positive and negative L1 influence in the Estonian learners’ use of partitive objects, subjects and predicatives. In general, the Estonian learner corpus did not only show significantly fewer partitive errors than the remaining learner corpora, but also some specific error patterns that were found to be due to L1-L2 differences. Furthermore, overgeneralization of L2 grammar rules was particularly prevalent in the German and Dutch learner corpora, but nearly absent from the Estonian learner corpus. On the whole, the learner corpus study revealed conspicuous differences between the Estonian learners on the one hand and the German and Dutch learners of Finnish on the other. The findings of the learner corpus study do not only indicate that -and how- prior linguistic knowledge matters, but they also paved the way for drawing implications for teaching. With respect to the teaching of the use of the partitive case to learners of Finnish from different L1 backgrounds, the study for instance suggests that stumbling blocks could probably be turned into stepping stones by emphasizing (subtle) L1-L2 differences in the case of Estonian learners of Finnish as a foreign language, while learners from L1 backgrounds that are non-related to the target language would probably benefit from being provided with additional insights into the exact nature of the case alternations and into the similarities and differences between them.
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Appendix A:
The structure of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICLFI subcorpus</th>
<th>Corpus size in words 6</th>
<th>Total number of texts</th>
<th>Mean text length in words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polish subcorpus</td>
<td>129,032</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonian subcorpus</td>
<td>122,600</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian subcorpus</td>
<td>105,537</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German subcorpus</td>
<td>83,329</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish subcorpus</td>
<td>76,856</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech subcorpus</td>
<td>58,677</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese subcorpus</td>
<td>54,257</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch subcorpus</td>
<td>51,700</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian subcorpus</td>
<td>20,806</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish subcorpus</td>
<td>10,700</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icelandic subcorpus</td>
<td>10,501</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romanian subcorpus</td>
<td>8,639</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian subcorpus</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austrian subcorpus</td>
<td>4,832</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakian subcorpus</td>
<td>2,017</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>746,983</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,505</strong></td>
<td><strong>213</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6 Sizes as of 2011-01-01
(for the latest updates, please visit the webpage of the International Corpus of Learner Finnish:
http://www.oulu.fi/suomitoisenkielenla/applies/16076)
## Appendix B: L2 writing proficiency rating scales based on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR level</th>
<th>Overall written production</th>
<th>Written interaction</th>
<th>Written correspondence</th>
<th>Creative writing and topicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1</strong></td>
<td>Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences</td>
<td>Can ask for or pass on personal details in written form.</td>
<td>Can write a simple postcard. Can enter personal information on a hotel registration form.</td>
<td>Can write simple phrases and sentences about himself/herself and imaginary people, where they live and what they do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2</strong></td>
<td>Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.</td>
<td>Can write short, simple formulaic notes relating to matters in areas of immediate need.</td>
<td>Can write very simple personal letters expressing thanks and apology.</td>
<td>Can write about everyday aspects of his/her environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The table continues on the following pages)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR level</th>
<th>Overall written production</th>
<th>Written interaction</th>
<th>Written correspondence</th>
<th>Creative writing and topicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Can write straightforward connected texts on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest by linking a series of shorter discrete elements into a linear sequence.</td>
<td>Can convey information and ideas on abstract as well as concrete topics, check information and ask about or explain problems with reasonable precision.</td>
<td>Can write personal letters giving new and expressing thoughts about abstract or cultural topics such as music and films.</td>
<td>Can write straightforward, detailed descriptions on a range of familiar subjects within his/her field of interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can write personal letters and notes asking for or conveying simple information of immediate relevance, getting across the point that he/she feels to be important.</td>
<td>Can write personal letters describing experiences, feelings and events in some detail.</td>
<td>Can write notes and messages conveying simple information of immediate relevance to his/her everyday life.</td>
<td>Can narrate a real or imagined story as a linear sequence of points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The table continues on the following pages)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR level</th>
<th>Overall written production</th>
<th>Written interaction</th>
<th>Written correspondence</th>
<th>Creative writing and topicality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Can write clear, detailed texts on a variety of subjects related to his/her field of interest, synthesizing and evaluating information and arguments from a number of sources.</td>
<td>Can express news and views effectively in writing, and relate to those of others.</td>
<td>Can write letters conveying degrees of emotion and highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences and commenting on the correspondent’s news and views.</td>
<td>Can write clear, detailed descriptions of real or imaginary events and experiences, marking the relationship between ideas in clear, connected text, and following established conventions of the genre concerned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can write a review of a film, book or play.

Can write a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting his/her main points with relevant supporting detail and examples.

(The table continues on the following page)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEFR level</th>
<th>Overall written production</th>
<th>Written interaction</th>
<th>Written correspondence</th>
<th>Creative writing and topicality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Can write clear, well-structured texts on complex subjects, underlining the relevant salient issues, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</td>
<td>Can express himself/herself with clarity and precision, relating to the addressee flexibly and effectively.</td>
<td>Can express himself/herself with clarity and precision in personal correspondence, using language flexibly and effectively, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.</td>
<td>Can write clear, detailed and well-structured descriptions and imaginative texts in an assured, personal and natural style appropriate to the reader in mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Can write clear, smoothly flowing complex texts in an appropriate and effective style and a logical (As C1)</td>
<td>(As C1)</td>
<td>(As C1)</td>
<td>Can write elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can write clear, smoothly flowing and fully engrossing stories and descriptions of experience in a style appropriate to the genre adopted.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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