

Finnish subject position

Finnish subject position and topicality

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In (1a), the nominative agreeing subject occupies the subject position. In (1b), the direct object occupies the subject position while the subject is in-situ.

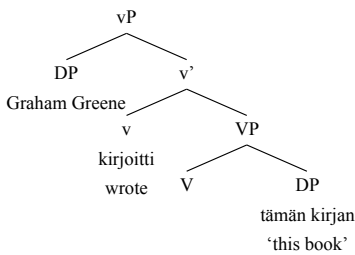
- (1) Holmberg and Nikanne (2002, 17)
- Graham Greene on kirjoittanut tämän kirjan.
G.G.NOM has.3SG written this.ACC book.ACC
'Graham Greene has written this book.'
 - Tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
this.ACC book.ACC has.3SG written G.G.NOM
'Graham Greene has written this book.'

These two sentences differ in the information content. In (b), the object argument is interpreted as topical and the nominative subject is focused.

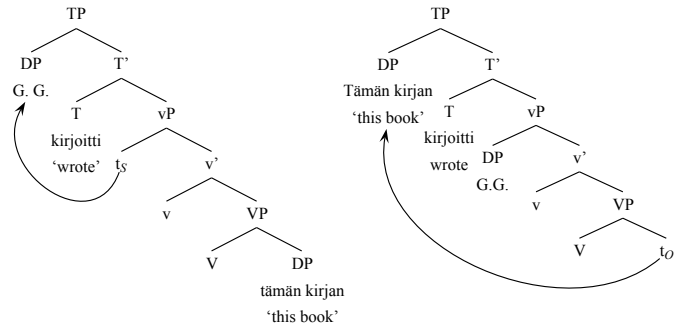
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Finnish subject position



Finnish subject position



Which property triggers movement of the subject in (a) and the object in (b)?

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Subject position

Some previous literature

- ▶ Vilkuna (1989): Position T that hosts subjects and discourse topics.
- ▶ Vainikka (1989): Position T is Spec,IP.
- ▶ Koskinen (1998): Feature [Topic] triggers movement
- ▶ Holmberg and Nikanne (2002): Subject position is an A-position for subjects and A-bar position for other elements. Element with [-Focus] moves to Spec,TP (or FinP).
- ▶ Holmberg (2005, 2010): Referentiality
- ▶ López (2009): Discourse-anaphoricity

Finnish subject position has EPP

Holmberg (2005, p. 543): EPP in Finnish

If the sentence contains one or more categories that can check the EPP, then one of them must merge with IP, or an expletive must be merged with IP.

For example (2b) is grammatical only if the finite verb is interpreted as contrastive. Example (c) shows that an expletive can fill the Spec,TP.

- (2)
- Pekka voitti kilpailun.
Pekka.NOM won.3SG
 - Voitti Pekka kilpailun.
won.3SG Pekka.NOM
 - Sitä voitti Pekka kilpailun.
EXPL won.3SG Pekka.NOM competition

Exceptions: *Sataa vettä. Tuli kiire.*

EPP = Extended Projection Principle (Chomsky, 1981), which states that the subject position must be filled.

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Proposal

Finnish EPP-movement (preliminary)

1. **Subject that Agrees with T**
2. Discourse-old elements
3. Other elements and expletives

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Movement of the subject: topicality

Discourse topic does not always occupy the subject position (Vilkuna, 1989):

(3) (Vilkuna, 1989, p. 81)

A: Mitä talvitakillesi on tapahtunut?
what winter-coat-ALL-2SG is happened

‘What has happened to your winter coat?’

- a. B: Se vietiin Pelastusarmeijaan.
it took-PASS Salvation Army-ILL
‘It was taken to the Salvation Army.’
- b. B: Äiti vei sen Pelastusarmeijaan.
mother took it-ACC Salvation Army-ILL
‘Mother took it to the Salvation Army.’

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Movement of the subject: topicality

Reinhart (1981): (1) Topic can be introduced by the expression ‘as for’; (2) topics can be introduced by expression ‘she said about’; (3) topic is referential; (4) presuppositional and existential sentences have no topics; and (5) topic carries existential presupposition (collected by López, 2009).

(4)

- a. Mitä tähän kirjaan tulee, Graham Greene on kirjoittanut sen.
As for this book, Graham Greene has written it.
- c. Merja sanoi tästä kirjasta että ilmeisesti Graham Greene on kirjoittanut sen.
written it.

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Movement of the subject: referentiality

The subject does not have to be referential (test 3) or carry an existential presupposition (test 5) in order to move to Spec,TP.

- (5)
- a. Mitä tähän sävelmään tulee, kuka tahansa oppii sen.
what this melody comes who.NOM ever learns it.ACC
‘As for this melody, anyone learns it.’
 - b. Ilmeisesti kuka tahansa oppii sen.
‘Apparently anyone learns it.’
 - c. Kuka osti tämän lehden?
who bought this paper
‘Who bought this paper?’
 - d. Kukaan ei oppinut sitä sävelmää.
no-one not learned that melody
‘No-one learned that melody.’

→ Topicality does not trigger movement of the subject.

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Movement of the subject: -Focus

Holmberg and Nikanne (2002): Elements with [-Focus] move to the subject position.

However, subject position can host DPs that are new information focus [+Focus].

(6) Kuka osti tämän lehden?
‘Who bought this paper?’

- a. Pekka osti tämän lehden.
Pekka.NOM bought this.ACC paper.ACC.
- b. Tämän lehden osti Pekka.
this.ACC paper.ACC bought Pekka.NOM

It seems that discourse features cannot explain movement of the subject (see also Holmberg, 2010, 213).

→ Movement of the subject is a consequence of Agree with T.

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Finnish EPP-movement (preliminary)

1. Subject that Agrees with T
2. **Discourse-old elements**
3. Other elements and expletives

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Discourse-old elements move upwards

According to Kaiser (2000, 2002), Finnish ditransitive constructions involve scrambling of a discourse-old element. The word order IO-DO is derived by moving the indirect object known from discourse to a position outside the VP.

In example (7a), the IO *miehelle* tends to be interpreted as discourse old.

- (7) a. Minä annoin miehelle kirjan. (IO-DO)
I-NOM gave man-ALL book-ACC
'I gave a/the man a/the book.'
b. Minä annoin kirjan miehelle. (DO-IO)
I-NOM gave book-ACC man-ALL
'I gave a/the book to a/the man.'

According to Kaiser, same feature [-Foc] could be present in both ditransitives and movement to the subject position.

→ Discourse-old elements move upwards.

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Constraints on movement

Elements with [+d] move upwards.

- (10) Pekka antoi hänelle kirjan ____.
Pekka gave s/he.ALL book.ACC
'Pekka gave him/her a book.'

However, if the direct object is discourse-old, the movement past it is not possible unless direct object is contrasted.

- (11) a. Mitä tähän kirjaan tulee, Pekka antoi sen hänelle.
As for this book Pekka gave it.ACC s/he.ALL
b. #Mitä tähän kirjaan tulee, Pekka antoi hänelle sen.
As for this book Pekka gave s/he.ALL it.ACC

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Relativized minimality

If the subject is discourse-old, the direct object cannot move past it (unless the subject is contrasted).

- (14) a. Mitä Graham Greenen tulee, hän kirjoitti tämän
As for Graham Greene, s/he.NOM wrote this.ACC
kirjan.
book.ACC
b. #Mitä Graham Greenen tulee, tämän kirjan kirjoitti
As for Graham Greene, this.ACC book.ACC wrote
hän.
s/he.NOM

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Discourse-anaphoricity

- (8) **Discourse anaphoricity** (de Hoop, 2003, p. 205)
A DP is anaphoric iff it refers to an object that has previously been mentioned in the discourse, and/or is part of the common ground.

According to (López, 2009), discourse anaphoricity regulates the word order in Finnish.

Tämän kirjan has [+d]:

- (9) Tämän kirjan on kirjoittanut Graham Greene.
this.ACC book.ACC has.3SG written G.G.NOM
'Graham Greene has written this book.'

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Relativized minimality

Let us assume, that the movement obeys Relativized Minimality (Rizzi, 1990). In Relativized Minimality, an element with a property A may prevent another element with the same property A from moving past it. Thus, configurations such as (12) are ungrammatical.

- (12) * $A \dots x_A \dots y_A$
↑

- (13) a. Mitä tähän kirjaan tulee, Pekka antoi sen[+d] hänelle[+d].
As for this book, Pekka gave it.ACC him.ALL
b. #Mitä tähän kirjaan tulee, Pekka antoi hänelle[+d] sen[+d].
As for this book, Pekka gave him.ALL it.ACC.

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Relativized minimality

An indirect object can move to the subject position only if neither the subject nor the object are discourse-old:

- (15) a. Mitä Pekkaan tulee, hänelle kirjoitti G.G. tämän kirjan.
As for Pekka, s/he.ALL wrote G. G. this.ACC book.ACC
b. #Mitä tähän kirjaan tulee, Pekalle kirjoitti G.G. sen.
As for this book, Pekka.ALL wrote G. G. it.ACC
c. #Mitä Graham Greenen tulee, Pekalle kirjoitti hän tämän
As for to G.G., Pekka.ALL wrote s/he this.ACC
kirjan.
book.ACC

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Finnish EPP-movement

1. Subject that Agrees with T.
2. Elements with [+d].
3. **Other elements and expletives**

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Movement of elements with [-d]

However, an element with [-d] cannot move to the subject position if the clause contains an element with [+d] (17). In addition, the subject seems to cause intervention effects (18)-(19).

- (17) a. Mitä tulee tähän kirjaan, se annetaan kenelle tahansa.
As for this book it.ACC give.PASS who.ALL ever
b. #Mitä tulee tähän kirjaan, kenelle tahansa annetaan se.
As for this book who.ALL ever give.PASS it.ACC
- (18) a. Kuka tahansa saa täältä mitä tahansa.
who ever can gets here what.PAR ever
b. *Mitä tahansa saa täältä kuka tahansa.
what.PAR ever gets here.from who.NOM ever
- (19) a. Joku osti jotain.
someone.NOM bought something.ACC
b. *Jotain osti joku.
something.ACC bought someone.NOM

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In-situ subjects

In sentence (b), *Aila* is either [+d] or [-d] and thus closer potential element to move to Spec,TP than *kenelle tahansa* with [-d].

- (23) (Holmberg, 2010, p. 213)
- a. Aila puhuu kenelle tahansa.
Aila speaks who-ALL ever
'Aila speaks to anyone.'
- b. *Kenelle tahansa puhuu Aila.
who-ALL ever speaks Aila

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Movement of elements with [-d]

Let us consider sentences that do not contain a subject. Examples (a-b) illustrate passive sentence and example (c) the generic subject.

- (16) a. Varmaan kenelle tahansa annetaan nykyään ajokortti.
probably who.to ever give.PASS nowadays drivers.licence
'Probably anyone will get a drivers license nowadays.'
- b. Täällä ketään ei kiusata ulkonäön perusteella.
here nobody not bullied appearance basis
'Nobody is bullied here because of her looks.'
- c. Millä hetkellä hyvänsä unohtaa lähteneensä.
any moment ever forgets left.INF.px
'One will forget leaving at any moment.'

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In-situ subjects

In-situ subjects are [-d] or [+contrast].

- (20) Tämän kirjan kirjoitti Graham Greene.
this.ACC book.ACC wrote G.G.NOM
'Graham Greene wrote this book.'
- (21) #Tämän kirjan kirjoitti hän.
this.ACC book.ACC wrote s/he.NOM
- (22) Mitä Graham Greenen ja tähän kirjaan tulee
As for G. G and this book,
a. #sen kirjoitti hän.
it.ACC wrote s/he.NOM
b. hän kirjoitti sen.
s/he.NOM wrote it.ACC

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