THE NULL GENERIC SUBJECT PRONOUN IN FINNISH

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Abstract
Constructions with a generic impersonal subject corresponding to English ‘one’ in Finnish are scrutinized. In Finnish these constructions never have a visible subject or any impersonal morphology. It is argued that the subject is a null pronoun which is assigned case and values the φ-features of T, just like a regular DP, but which is invisible to the EPP and therefore always remains vP-internal. An argument that it is vP-internal is presented based on the subject’s scope. A typology of impersonal constructions is discussed. An alternative theory, according to which the agreement morphology on the finite verb is an incorporated generic pronoun, is discussed and rejected. Generic subject constructions in other languages are discussed. The Finnish null ‘one’ is shown to be characteristic of partial null subject languages only.

1. Introduction
Finnish does not have an overt generic pronoun corresponding to English one, French on, German man, or Italian si. The Finnish counterparts to English, German, etc. constructions with a generic pronominal subject have no overt indication of a subject at all.

(1) Tässä istuu mukavasti.
here sits comfortably
‘One can sit comfortably here.’

A possible analysis of (1) is that it has a null generic pronoun subject. Indeed, scholars who have investigated or commented on the construction have assumed that it contains a syntactically active generic subject pronoun, and have presented arguments to that effect; see Hakulinen & Karttunen 1973, Laitinen 1995, Vainikka 1989, Vainikka & Levy 1999. However, to date there is no comprehensive account of the syntactic properties of this putative null pronoun. In the present paper I will try to determine in as much detail as possible the syntactic properties of the Finnish generic pronoun, or G-pronoun, as I will call it. I will name the construction which, by hypothesis, contains this category the generic subject construction, or GSC for short. The following questions will be addressed:
(a) Where does the Finnish GSC fit in the typology of impersonal constructions?
(b) What are the arguments that the GSC has a subject?
(c) What features does this subject have? Specifically,
(d) Does it trigger agreement?
(e) Does it receive case?
(f) Why does it not satisfy the EPP?
(g) Where in the structure does it reside?

It will be shown that the pronoun receives case, triggers agreement, and generally does everything overt subjects do, except that lacking a lexical form altogether it is invisible for the EPP, and therefore cannot move, but remains in its first-merged position.

An alternative analysis is considered, according to which the Finnish GSC does not have a subject other than the 3SG agreement on the finite verb or auxiliary, which in Finnish would have the properties of a generic pronoun. This analysis is rejected. In the final section it will be shown that the Finnish GSC is characteristic of a type of languages which may be called partial null-subject languages or semi-pro-drop languages, which include Brazilian Portuguese, Hebrew, Marathi, and Icelandic, but is different from the GSC of consistent null-subject languages such as Arabic, European Portuguese, Greek, Italian, etc. An additional question addressed in the paper is, therefore
(h) Why do only partial null-subject languages have a null generic pronoun?

2. The Finnish generic pronoun and the typology of impersonal pronouns

In a recent paper on the typology of impersonal pronouns Egerland (2004) distinguishes three distinct readings of the Germanic and Romance impersonal pronouns *man* (Swedish), *on* (French), and *si* (Italian): He dubs them the generic, the arbitrary, and the specific reading.² These are exemplified in (2a,b,c), respectively, with French examples (from Egerland 2004).

(2)a. *On doit travailler jusqu’a l’age de 65 ans.* (generic)

ON must work until the age of 65 years

b. *On a travaillé pendant deux mois pour résoudre le problème.* (arbitrary)

ON has worked for two months to resolve the problem

c. *Hier soir on a été congédiè.* (specific)

Yesterday evening ON was fired
In (2a) the reading of *on* is roughly ‘people in general’. In (2b) the intended reading is roughly ‘some people’, and in (2c) it is ‘we’. In English the three readings are encoded by distinct pronouns: The generic reading by *one* or *you*, the arbitrary reading by *they*, and the specific reading by *we*.

In Finnish, the three readings are distributed over two impersonal constructions: The GSC and the (so called) passive: The GSC only has the generic reading, while the passive has the arbitrary or the specific reading.\(^3\)

(3)a. Täällä saa työtä jos puhuu saksaa. \hspace{1cm} \text{(generic)}
    here gets work if speaks German
    ‘You get a job here if you speak German.’

b. Täällä puhutaan saksaa. \hspace{1cm} \text{(arbitrary)}
    here speak-PASS German
    ‘German is spoken here/They speak German here.’

c. (Me) puhuttiin saksaa. \hspace{1cm} \text{(specific)}
    we spoke-PASS German
    ‘We spoke German.’

Egerland shows that the arbitrary and specific readings of *man*, *on* etc. are closely related, having essentially the same syntactic properties, distinct from the generic reading (see also Cabredo-Hofherr 2004). In Finnish this is reflected in the form of the verb: active 3SG for the generic pronoun, passive non-agreeing for the arbitrary and specific reading. In Finnish the affinity between the arbitrary and specific reading is particularly striking, as it has led to the passive becoming the normal form for expressing 1PL active meaning in colloquial Finnish, with an optionally overt 1PL pronoun subject, as exemplified by (3c).\(^4\) When investigating the properties of the Finnish GSC, it is, indeed, natural to compare it with the properties of the passive.

The proper classification of the Finnish passive is a controversial issue; see Blevins 2003, Manninen & Nelson 2004.\(^5\) For the present purposes the important property of the Finnish passive is that the understood subject, when not specific, has arbitrary reference, in Egerland’s sense.
3. There is a subject in the GSC

The most obvious argument against postulating a syntactically projected subject in the Finnish GSC is that it has no visible (i.e. audible) subject, and cannot have one; Finnish doesn’t have any overt generic pronoun. Furthermore, the EPP is not checked by any covert subject in the GSC, but has to be checked either by an expletive or by moving some other category, such as an object or a locative or temporal adverbial to the preverbal ‘EPP-position’ (see Holmberg & Nikanne 2002 on the EPP in Finnish).

(4)a. *Istuu mukavasti tässä.
sits comfortably here

b. Tässä istuu mukavasti.
here sits comfortably

c. Sitä istuu mukavasti tässä.
EX sits comfortably here
‘One sits comfortably here.’

The easiest explanation of this is that the construction has no subject. Nevertheless, scholars who have investigated the GSC (Hakulinen & Karttunen 1973, Laitinen 1995, Vainikka 1989, Vainikka & Levy 1999) have assumed that it does contain a covert generic subject. In the following I will argue that they are right.

The most straightforward evidence that the GSC contains a syntactically active subject is that it may contain a subject-oriented anaphor (ADE = adessive case, ALL = allative case, PX = possessive reflexive suffix, COM = comparative); see Vainikka 1989: 232f., Laitinen 1995.

(5)a. Shelliasemalla voi pestä auto-nsa.
Shell-station-ADE can-3SG wash car-PX
‘You can wash your car at the Shell station.’

b. Sitä ei kuulu ottaa itseään liian vakavasti.6
EX not-3SG should take SELF–PX too seriously
‘One shouldn’t take oneself too seriously.’

The Finnish possessive reflexive suffix is an anaphor falling under Principle A of the Binding Theory (see Kanerva 1987, Vainikka 1989, Trosterud 1993). In (5b) it combines with the reflexive itse ‘self’, also an anaphor. The antecedent in (5a,b) is, presumably, the null G-pronoun subject.7

Another piece of evidence, put forth in Laitinen 1995, of a generic subject in the GSC is that it may contain an agent-oriented adverbial.

(6) Sinne ei muuta vapaaehtoisesti.
    there not move voluntarily
    ‘One doesn’t move there voluntarily.’

In this it contrasts with notoriously subjectless constructions such as the the English middle:

(7) This book reads easily/*eagerly.

Although the verb’s argument structure includes an agent, that agent is apparently not accessible for modification by an agent-oriented adverb in the English middle construction – while it is accessible in the Finnish GSC.

Furthermore, the GSC may contain an infinitival clause with a PRO subject evidently controlled by a generic subject in the matrix clause.

(8) Tänne tulee mielellään [PRO ostamaan keramiikkaa].
    here comes with-pleasure    buy-INF  pottery
    ‘It’s nice to come here to buy pottery.’

Whether we take these as valid arguments for a syntactically projected subject depends on our prior assumptions, though. For example, if an object anaphor can be bound by a verb which includes a subject argument in its argument structure, as in Williams’s (1994) theta-theory, then obviously (5a,b) do not indicate a syntactically projected subject.8 This also applies in the case of control, as in (8). In section 4, and again in section 9, I will adduce some arguments for a syntactically projected subject in the Finnish GSC which are not dependent in
this way on prior assumptions about the mapping of argument structure onto syntactic structure.

4. Does the G-pronoun trigger agreement?

Which \( \phi \)-features, if any, does the abstract G-pronoun have? Insofar as the G-pronoun triggers agreement, it should be possible to determine this from the agreeing predicate. The finite verb or auxiliary is inflected for 3SG in the GSC. This could be either because T agrees with a 3SG G-pronoun or it could be the default feature values of T.

As discussed by Vainikka (1989), in Finnish it is actually possible to determine with near-certainty which is the right analysis. This is because there is a correlation between subject agreement and object case in Finnish. There are two non-partitive structural object cases in Finnish, morphologically distinct on singular lexical NPs: nominative and accusative. The nominative is the stem form of the noun, the accusative is marked by a suffix \(-n\). The choice between them depends on the presence in the sentence of a nominative subject triggering agreement on T. If there is one, the object is marked accusative, if not the object is nominative. See Timberlake 1972, Maling 1993, Reime 1993, Kiparsky 2001.

(9)a. \textit{Minä osti-}n auton / \textit{*auto.}
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{I-NOM bought-1SG car-ACC/car-NOM} \\
   & \text{‘I bought a car.’}
   
   \text{b. Minä aion ostaa auton / \textit{*auto.}}
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{I-NOM intend-1SG buy car-ACC/car-NOM} \\
   & \text{‘I intend to buy a car.’}
   
   \text{c. Minun pitää ostaa auto / \textit{*auton.}}
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{I-GEN should-3SG buy car-NOM/car-ACC} \\
   & \text{‘I should buy a car.’}
   
   \text{d. Osta auto / \textit{*auton!}}
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{buy-IMP car-NOM/car-ACC} \\
   & \text{‘Buy a car!’}
   
   \text{e. Siellä ostettiin auto / \textit{*auton.}}
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{there bought-PASS car-NOM/car-ACC} \\
   & \text{‘A car was bought there.’}
   
   \end{align*}
   \end{align*}
   \end{align*}
In (9a) the verb agrees with the nominative subject, and the object is accusative. (9b) is a biclausal construction where the embedded verb that takes the object is infinitive, but the matrix verb agrees with a nominative subject, which is sufficient for triggering accusative on the object. In (9c) the matrix verb assigns genitive, a lexical case, to its subject. The genitive does not trigger agreement on T, which therefore has the default 3SG form. Consequently, the object of the embedded infinitive gets nominative. In (9d) the verb is imperative, a subjectless, non-finite, non-agreeing verb form, so the object gets nominative. In (9e) the verb is in the passive form, which is also a non-agreeing form, so again the object gets nominative.

(10) shows that it is not the presence of an overt nominative subject which is the crucial factor triggering assignment of accusative on the object, but presence of subject agreement.

(10) *Me ostetaan auton/*auto.
we buy-PASS car-NOM/car-ACC
‘We’re buying a car.’

(10) exemplifies the use of the passive in construction with a 1PL subject to encode 1PL active meaning. The presence of the overt subject pronoun, which is nominative but does not trigger agreement on the passive verb form, does not affect the form of the object.10

Now compare with the GSC:

(11) *Jos ostaa auton/*auto, ...
if buy-3SG car-ACC/car-NOM
‘If you buy a car. …’

Compare especially (11) and (9c). Both have a 3SG verb, but while the object is nominative in (9c), due to the absence of subject agreement, it is accusative in (11). This shows quite clearly that the 3SG form in (11) is not assigned by default, but is assigned by a subject. That is to say, there is a subject, a G-pronoun, in the GSC capable of triggering subject agreement. The form of the agreeing verb is 3SG, indicating that the G-pronoun has 3SG value.

5. Does the G-pronoun have case?
For overt DPs, only those with nominative case can trigger agreement in Finnish. So it is entirely reasonable to take the G-pronoun in, for example, (11) to have nominative case. The G-pronoun may also occur in environments where other cases than nominative are assigned. Consider (12a,b),

(12)a. Sinun kannattaa vuokrata auto / *auton.
   you-GEN should-3SG rent car-NOM/car-ACC
   ‘You would do well to rent a car.’

b. Nyt kannattaa vuokrata auto/*auton.
   now should-3SG rent car-NOM/car-ACC
   ‘It’s good value renting a car now.’

The verb kannattaa ‘should, do well to’ along with a host of other necessive predicates (lähtyy ‘must’, pitää ‘should’, on pakko literally ‘is obligation’, i.e. ‘must’ etc.) takes a subject with genitive case (see Laitinen & Vilkuna 1993). Consequently no agreement is triggered, the verb has default 3SG form, and the object, if the main verb is transitive, gets nominative case. In (12b) the subject is the putative covert G-pronoun. The fact that the object in this case, too, has nominative case then strongly indicates that the G-pronoun gets genitive case, hence fails to agree with the verb, causing nominative case to be assigned to the object.

If a predicate which assigns a lexical-semantic case, as the necessive predicates do in Finnish, has to assign its case, then (12b) provides additional evidence that the generic subject is structurally represented, as there is no other recipient of the genitive case.

Broadly speaking the generalization is that the G-pronoun occurs in any case-environments where overt subjects occur. (13) is an example of a partitive subject, (14) an example of an adessive subject.11

(13)a. Kallea ärsyttää kun telkkarista tulee urheilua.
   Kalle-PAR irritate-3SG when TV-ELA comes sports
   ‘It irritates Kalle when they show sports on TV.’

b. Jos ärsyttää kun telkkarista tulee urheilua, voi sammuttaa telkkarin.
   if irritate-3SG when TV-ELA come sports can turn-off TV
   ‘If it irritates you when they show sports on TV, you can turn it off.’
   I-ADE is-3SG headache
   ‘I’ve a headache.’

b. Jos on päänsärky se voi johtua nesteen puutteesta.
   if is-3SG headache it can derive from dehydration-ELA
   ‘If you have a headache, it may be due to dehydration.’

We conclude that the G-pronoun has case, like overt subjects.

6. Why does the G-pronoun not satisfy the EPP?

One clear difference between the covert Finnish G-pronoun and other arguments in Finnish, overt or covert, is that it does not satisfy the EPP. For that reason the preverbal position of a GSC must generally be filled by a non-subject category, often a locative phrase, or the expletive sitä. The examples in (4) are repeated here as (15a,b,c).

(15)a. *Istuu mukavasti tässä.
   sits comfortably here

b. Tässä istuu mukavasti.
   here sits comfortably

c. Sitä istuu mukavasti tässä.
   EX sits comfortably here
   ‘One can sit comfortably here.’

The fact that the G-pronoun is phonetically null is not in itself a sufficient reason for this. Finnish is a partial pro-drop language, where particularly 1st and 2nd person subject pronouns can be null. As discussed in Holmberg (to appear - a) these definite null pronouns do satisfy the EPP, and are consequently incompatible with the expletive.12

(16)a. (Minä) istu-n mukavasti tässä.
   I sit-1SG comfortably here
‘I’m sitting comfortably here.’

b.  *Sitä istun mukavasti tässä.
  EX sit-1SG comfortably here

According to Holmberg & Nikanne (2002) the EPP in Finnish requires a topic in the sentence-initial position here identified as specIP. A topic is an expression denoting an individual or a group already established in the discourse, about which the predicate says something new; see Kiss 1995. Often the subject is a topic, in which case it occupies that position, but if the subject is focused, or if the subject is missing altogether, some other referential, topic-worthy category may take over filling specIP, for instance the object, as in (17), or a locative adverbial as in (15b). Failing that, the expletive sitä is inserted.

(17)a.  Aila keitti kahvin.
  Aila-NOM made coffee-ACC
  ‘Aila made the coffee.’

b.  Kahvin keitti Aila.
  coffee-ACC made Aila-NOM
  ‘The coffee was made by Aila/The one who made the coffee was Aila.’

Holmberg (to appear - a) proposes the following formulation of the Finnish EPP:

(18) If the sentence contains one or more categories which can check the EPP, then one of them must remerge with IP /i.e. move to specIP/, or an expletive be merged with IP.

The reason for the conditional clause is that the EPP is suspended if the sentence does not contain a referential category capable of serving as topic. See Holmberg & Nikanne 2002 for discussion. In (19), for example, the word kiire is not an argument but a (nominal) part of a complex predicate.13

(19)  Tuli kiire.
  came haste
‘There was a rush.’

Conceivably, then, the reason why the G-pronoun cannot check the EPP is that it is not referential. I assume that it functions as an indefinite NP (or DP) introducing a variable bound by a generic operator $GEN$, which roughly means ‘generally’. The logical form of (20a) is then, very roughly, (20b).

(20) a. $Tässä istuu mukavasti.$
    ‘One sits comfortably here.’
  b. $GENx \ (x \text{ a person} \rightarrow x \text{ sits comfortably here})$

A GSC can only be interpreted as being about humans.\textsuperscript{14} This restriction either comes from the G-pronoun itself (Egerland 2004), or is assigned by default (a lexically unspecified subject always refers to humans). In either case, the reading will be roughly (20b).\textsuperscript{15}

It is, however, not true that the EPP can only be checked by referential categories, capable of serving a topic function.

(21) a. $Kuka tahansa voi tulla tänne.$
    ‘Whoever can come here’
  b. $Tänne voi tulla kuka tahansa.$
    ‘Here can come whoever’
  c. *$Voi tulla kuka tahansa (tänne).$
    ‘Can come whoever here’

*Kuka tahansa* ‘whoever’ is an indeterminate quantifier, and as such not referential and capable of functioning as topic. In fact, if the EPP strictly called for a topic, we wouldn’t expect an expletive to be able to check the EPP. A closer approximation to the truth is that the subject may check the EPP even if it is not a referential category but, for example a quantified NP, but non-subjects have to be referential and interpretable as topics, to check the EPP.\textsuperscript{16}

(22) a. $Aila puhuu kenelle tahansa.$
    ‘Aila speaks to anyone.’
b. *Kenelle tahansa puhuu Aila.
who-ALL ever speaks Aila

So the question then remains, why can’t a G-pronoun satisfy the EPP? The answer, I propose, is that the G-pronoun is lexically null. In this respect it is different from the 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} person Finnish null pronouns which have a lexical form, and are spelled out but are then optionally deleted in the derivation of PF. Following Holmberg (to appear - a), I reject the traditional P&P theory of null subjects according to which they are instances of \textit{pro}, an unspecified nominal empty category which receives its values from Agr (Chomsky 1982, Rizzi 1986). This theory is incompatible with the feature theory proposed by Chomsky 1995, according to which Agr, that is the set of \( \phi \)-features of T, is unvalued and receives its values from an inherently valued nominal argument. Instead, they are either regular pronouns which are deleted when recoverable from the agreement on T or from an antecedent in the discourse, or they are lexically null but otherwise featurally specified pronouns.\textsuperscript{17} The G-pronoun in Finnish belongs in the latter category: It does not have any lexical form, and thus can’t possibly be spelled out. Given that the EPP only attracts spelled-out categories, the G-pronoun cannot move.

To make this more explicit: I assume a derivational theory along the lines of Chomsky (2000, 2001). The derivation of a sentence begins by drawing a set of lexical items from the lexicon, forming the Numeration. The Syntax then uses the items in the Numeration to build a tree by the operations Merge, Agree and Move. A crucial role in this process is played by uninterpretable and unvalued features. The EPP-feature is an example of an uninterpretable feature, while the \( \phi \)-features of T (which end up spelled out as subject agreement on the finite verb) and structural case on DPs are examples of unvalued features; I follow Adger 2002 in making a distinction between uninterpretable and unvalued features. Uninterpretable features have to be eliminated, and unvalued features have to be assigned a value, before the derivation reaches either of the two interface-levels LF and PF.

For example, subject movement from spec,vP to spec,TP is assumed to operate as follows: T has a complex of unvalued features consisting typically of person and number, the \( \phi \)-features of T. Once merged, T becomes a ‘probe’ searching its c-command domain for a ‘goal’, that is a category which can value its \( \phi \)-features. The first category it encounters which (a) has a set of interpretable, that is inherently valued features matching the unvalued features of T, and (b) has at least one unvalued feature itself which matches an inherently
valued feature of T, will be the goal of the probe T. In a transitive construction the goal will be a DP in spec,vP, in an intransitive one, a DP in VP. This DP, unless it is already assigned a Case value (such as a lexical Case assigned by the verb), assigns values to T’s φ−−features, and receives nominative Case-value from T. If T also has an EPP-feature, the DP probed by T will move to spec,TP, thus checking and thereby deleting the EPP-feature.

When all unvalued features of a category have been assigned a value and all its uninterpretable features are deleted the category can be spelled out, which is to say that it is provided with a phonological form. I follow Svenonius 2002 and Holmberg & Hróarsdóttir 2004 in assuming that a category is spelled out as soon as its unvalued features are assigned a value and its uninterpretable features are deleted. In the case of subject movement to spec,TP this is when the subject is probed and assigned Case by T. Once the subject DP is spelled out, it can be attracted by the EPP to spec,TP.

If the subject happens to be the G-pronoun, it will be probed by T, and, unless it is already assigned a case value (say, genitive, assigned by a necessity verb) it will assign 3SG value to T, and will itself be assigned nominative by T. However, the G-pronoun can’t be spelled out as there is no phonological form for the G-pronoun in Finnish. Consequently it can’t be attracted by the EPP of T.18 In this situation, the EPP will attract another category, which is spelled out, to spec,TP. Alternatively, if the Numeration contains the expletive sitä, this item will be merged in spec,TP, checking and deleting the EPP.19

7. Preliminary conclusions and a comparison with overt G-pronouns

There is a nominal category, the G-pronoun, serving as subject in the Finnish GSC, with person and number (3SG) plus a [+human] feature. The category is assigned case like other nominal subjects, and triggers agreement on T if it is assigned nominative by T. It is an indefinite expression, bound by a generic operator. As for syntactic position, the G-pronoun is locked in its first-merged position, since, being lexically null, it is invisible to the EPP of T as well as the EPP of C.

Egerland (2004) proposes that the impersonal pronouns on, man, etc. are severely underspecified, being inherently specified only for [+human] (as the subject of impersonals always refer to human beings). This is why they are compatible with reference to the speaker, the hearer, other people which may be male or female, singular or plural entities, all depending on the context. This is also reflected in agreement. While the finite verb or copula
in construction with on always has (according to Egerland) default 3SG form, a predicative adjective or noun may be singular or plural, masculine or feminine, depending on which category of people is being talked about. The example is adapted from Egerland 2004.

\[ (23) \text{Quand on est beau / belle / beaux/belles, …} \]
\[ \text{when one is-SG beautiful.M.SG/F.SG/M.PL./F.PL} \]

Not all the impersonal pronouns are exactly like on, but it seems that some variation in agreement is allowed in all the Germanic and Romance languages which have such pronouns. Furthermore, Egerland proposes that the only, formal difference between the generic pronoun and the arbitrary/specific counterpart is that the former is bound by a generic operator. More precisely, Egerland (2004) proposes that man, on, and si are expletives, whose role is to satisfy the EPP. The ‘real’ G-pronoun is an empty category, a bundle of φ−features situated presumably in the thematic subject position. This accounts for the split agreement seen in (23): The predicative adjective would agree with the phonetically empty thematic subject, while the finite verb/copula has default 3SG. The pronoun on, by hypothesis, lacks φ−features of its own, and is therefore compatible with any combination of φ−features on its associate, the thematic subject.

Can we equate the postulated Finnish G-pronoun with Egerland’s abstract subject? The main difference between Finnish and the languages discussed by Egerland, as regards the generic pronoun, would then be that Finnish lacks an expletive pronoun such as on, etc., instead satisfying the EPP by moving some other visible category to spec,TP.

I will assume that this is correct, even though some differences between Finnish and French remain unexplained: First, Finnish does not exhibit variable adjective agreement the way French does.

\[ (24) \text{Kun on kaunis/*kauniita, …} \]
\[ \text{when is beautiful-SG/beautiful-PL} \]
\[ ‘\text{When you are beautiful, …’} \]

We have also established that the Finnish G-pronoun triggers agreement on the finite verb, which, for some reason, Egerland’s abstract subject does not do. The Finnish G-pronoun is syntactically singular. By contrast, the Finnish arbitrary pronoun which is arguably present in
the passive appears to be syntactically plural, since the predicative adjective shows plural agreement.\textsuperscript{20}

(25) \textit{Siellä oltiin kauniita / *kaunis.}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{there be-PASS beautiful-PL/beautiful-SG} \\
\text{‘They were beautiful, there.’}
\end{tabular}

8. A prediction if the G-pronoun is within vP

If the subject in the GSC is lodged inside vP throughout the derivation, we might expect this to have effects on the scope of the subject. Consider the following facts (PRC = participle, PX = possessive suffix, ABL = ablative):

(26)a. \textit{Minä luulen [ole-va-ni nero].}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{I believe be-PRC-PX.1SG genius} \\
\text{‘I consider myself a genius.’}
\end{tabular}

b. \textit{Kalle luulee [ole-va-nsa nero].}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{Kalle believes be-PRC-PX.3 genius} \\
\text{‘Kalle considers himself a genius.’}
\end{tabular}

c. \textit{Jos luulee [olevansa nero], ei kannata puhua siitä ääneen.}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{if believes be-PRC-PX.3 genius not should speak it-ABL aloud} \\
\text{‘If you consider yourself a genius, you’d better not say it aloud.’}
\end{tabular}

The bracketed embedded non-finite clause in (26a,b,c) is headed by a participle marked by the suffix \textit{–va}, plus a possessive suffix, which is a subject-oriented anaphor falling under Principle A, and hence must be bound by the matrix subject in this case. As shown in (26c) a G-pronoun subject can be antecedent of the possessive suffix. Compare this with (27):

(27)a. \textit{Eeva ei kirjoita runoja [tulla-kse-en rikkaa-ksi].}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{Eeva not writes poems come.INF–TRA-PX3 rich-TRA} \\
\text{‘Eeva does not write poetry in order to become rich.’}
\end{tabular}

b. */?\textit{Runoja ei kirjoita [tulla-kse-en rikkaa-ksi].}

\begin{tabular}{l}
\text{poems not write come.INF–TRA-PX3 rich-TRA}
\end{tabular}
c. Runoja ei kirjoita [siksi että tulisi rikkaaksi].
   poems not write therefore that come-CON rich-TRA
   ‘You don’t write poetry in order to become rich.’

This embedded non-finite clause is based on an infinitive with the translati ve (TRA) suffix – kse, plus the posses sive suffix (here preferably in the form –Ṽn, Ṽ an underspecified vowel, rather than –nsa)21. In this case a matrix G-pronoun cannot very well bind the anaphor. (27c) is a control that the problem in (27b) is indeed the anaphoric possessive suffix. Speakers vary in their judgment of (27b) and the corresponding (b)-sentences in (28, 29), below. Some speakers regard them as only somewhat marginal, others (like myself) are more negative. All speakers that I have consulted agree that there is a contrast between the fully acceptable (a) and (c) sentences on the one hand, and the (b) sentences on the other hand, in (27, 28, 29). There is also no question about the well-formedness of (26b).

Next compare (28):

(28)a. Uuno sai päänsärkyä [istue-ssa-an auringossa].
   Uuno got headache sit.INF–INE-PX3 sun-INE
   ‘Uuno got a headache when sitting in the sun.’

b. */?Voi saada päänsärkyä [istuessaan auringossa].22
   can get headache sit.INF–INE-PX3 sun-INE

c. Voi saada päänsärkyä [kun istuu auringossa].
   can get headache when sits sun-INE
   ‘You can get a headache sitting in the sun.’

The embedded clause here is based on an infinitive with the inessive suffix -ssa, plus the possessive suffix. In this case, too, a matrix G-pronoun cannot very well bind the anaphor.

Next compare (29):

(29)a. Kalle lähti kotiin [kysyttyään luvan].
   Kalle went home ask-PRC-PX permission
   ‘Kalle went home, having asked permission.’

b. */?Kotiin saa mennä [kysyttyään luvan].
   home may go ask-PRC-PX permission
This non-finite form is based on the past passive participle marked by -tty-, plus the possessive suffix. Again the matrix G-pronoun subject fails to bind the anaphor. What (27, 28 29) have in common is that the embedded clause is an adverbial, while it is a complement in (26). On the (standard) assumption that adverbials are adjuncts to vP, I suggest that the difference between the (a)-sentences and the (b)-sentences in (27, 28,29) is that the subject in the (a)-sentences has raised to a position where it clearly c-commands the adverbial, while the G-pronoun subject in the (b) sentence, unable to move because it is invisible to the EPP, remains within vP, unable to c-command and thus bind the anaphor in the adverbial clause. This is not a problem in (26) where the embedded clause is a complement of the verb.

The reason why the (b)-sentences in (27,28,29) for some speakers are not completely ruled out, is that as an adjunct to vP, the embedded clause in can be (marginally) construed as c-commanded by the subject in spec,vP, and therefore its anaphoric subject is (marginally) bindable by the matrix subject.23

Finnish has other constructions than the GSC where the subject appears to remain in a low position, for example (30).

(30) Kotiin lähti Kalle-kin [kysyttyän luvan].
    home went Kalle-too ask-PRC-PX permission
    ‘Kalle, too, went home, having asked permission.’

Here the subject is focused and remains in a low position. As shown, it can bind the possessive suffix in the embedded clause. But although it remains in a lower position than spec,TP, it may well have moved out of specvP. The fact that it is incorporated in the clitic focus-particle –kin indicates that it has indeed moved out of vP, at least in this case. In general, when an overt subject remains in postverbal position it is focused, and may thus be analyzed as having moved to a focus-position which (arguably) always c-commands VP-adverbials.
9. An alternative theory

The following is an alternative theory of the Finnish GSC, based on the idea that the finite subject agreement marking in null-subject languages is an interpretable category, basically a pronoun which is morphologically realized as an affix. Subject agreement is then not a matter of Agree, i.e. a DP assigning feature values to an unvalued T, but of two nominal categories, AgrS and a DP necessarily sharing the same feature values. Versions of this theory were widely assumed in the period following Pollock 1989, but are less widely assumed today, particularly following Chomsky’s (1995) critique of this theory of agreement. For a recent version, see Platzack 2004.

Within such a theory the GSC might be analyzed as a subjectless construction in the sense that the G-pronoun would quite simply be AgrS with 3SG feature value. The generic reading would then be a consequence of merging a generic operator binding AgrS.

This theory is initially appealing for mainly two reasons:
(a) It follows straightforwardly that the EPP is not satisfied by the G-pronoun. Since AgrS is a head, which ends up incorporated in the finite verb, it cannot satisfy the EPP.24
(b) On the reasonable assumption that AgrS, if it is interpretable, can bind anaphora, the binder of the possessive reflexive would be the 3SG AgrS.

(31)  Siellä voi pestä auto-nsa.
     there can-3SG wash car-PX3
     ‘You can wash your car there.’

This would then explain why the passive (arbitrary subject) construction does not license anaphora: The passive finite verb does not show any agreement, i.e. it does not have AgrS (see Holmberg & al. 1993).

(32)  Siellä pestään auto (*-nsa).
     there wash-PASS car (PX3)
     ‘A car is being washed there.’

Within this theory, the Finnish passive would be a radically subjectless construction.

There are a number of reasons to reject this theory in favour of the theory expounded in the previous sections. One is that if AgrS is itself the G-pronoun we have no obvious account
of the contrast between complements and adjuncts as regards binding by a G-pronoun, discussed in the previous section: AgrS c-commands both complements and VP-adjuncts. Furthermore, as regards the Finnish passive there is at least some evidence of a syntactically projected subject: It may contain a subject-oriented adverbial such as ‘voluntarily’, just like the GSC does.

(33) Täällä kaivetaan ojia vapaehtoisesti.
    here    dig-PASS ditches voluntarily
    ‘They dig ditches here voluntarily.’

If (33) means that there is a syntactically projected null subject in the sentence, then the ban against the possessive suffix in (32) cannot be because the sentence lacks agreement, or more generally, because it lacks a subject.

Even more telling is the contrast between (11) and (12b), discussed in sections 4 and 5, and repeated here as (34) and (35):

(34) Jos ostaa        auton/*auto,  ...
    if      buy-3SG car-ACC/car-NOM
    ‘If you buy a car. …’

(35) Nyt kannattaa      vuokrata auto/*auton.
    now    should-3SG rent       car-NOM/car-ACC
    ‘It’s good value renting a car now.’

As discussed, the contrast as regards object case was due to presence or absence of subject agreement: In terms of the theory expounded in this paper, in (34) the verb agrees with the nominative covert G-pronoun, just as it would with an overt, definite subject. In (35) the verb does not agree, because the covert G-pronoun has genitive case, just as an overt definite subject would. The 3SG form in (35) is the default finite form; the verb kannattaa ‘should, be worth it’, like other necessive verbs, does not occur in any other form than 3SG.25

In a theory where AgrS itself is the G-pronoun the existence of (35) is unexpected. Within this theory it is presumably the presence vs. absence of AgrS (of the interpretable kind, rather than just the default form of a verb) which determines the form of the object: If the sentence contains (interpretable) AgrS, the subject gets nominative and the object
accusative case, if not, the object gets nominative case. In (35) there is no (interpretable) AgrS, shown by the nominative form of the object. But if there is no (interpretable) AgrS, then (35) has no category which could carry the theta-role and be bound by the generic operator. We expect the sentence to violate the theta-criterion.

In other words, if (35) were sharply ill-formed, this would constitute strong evidence in favour of the theory where there is no other G-pronoun in Finnish than AgrS itself, as under that theory (35) ought to violate the theta-criterion. Correspondingly, since (35) is perfectly well-formed (with the right choice of case), this must be considered evidence against that same theory.

Note that the difference between the GSC and the passive in Finnish as regards the licensing of anaphora seems to be paralleled by generic man and arbitrary man (in Egerland’s 2004 sense), in Swedish. The Scandinavian languages have a possessive reflexive pronoun. This reflexive pronoun can be bound by generic man (corresponding to English one or you) but not by arbitrary man (corresponding to English arbitrary they). The Finnish passive sentences are added to show that they pattern like the Swedish arbitrary man-sentences: The anaphoric possessive suffix is not licensed.

(36a. Man kan tvätta sin bil här. (Swedish)
MAN can wash REFL car here
‘You can wash your car here.’

b. Man övergav tydligen *sin bil / bilen här (Swedish)
MAN abandoned apparently REFL car/the car here
‘They have apparently abandoned the car here.’

c. Tässä ilmeisesti luovuttiin autosta (*-an).
here apparently abandon-PASS-PAST car PX

(37a. Man bygger inte sitt hus på en månad. (Swedish)
MAN builds not REFL house in one month
‘You don’t build your house in one month.’

b. Man byggde inte *sitt hus / det här huset på en månad.
MAN built not REFL house/the here house in one month
‘They didn’t build this house in one month.’

c. Tätä taloa/ *Taloaan ei rakennettu kuukaudessa.
   this house/ house-PX not build-PASS month-INE
   ‘They didn’t build this house in a month.’

If this is correct, it indicates that the difference between the GSC and the passive in Finnish as regards the licensing of an anaphoric possessive is not due to the presence or absence of subject agreement, or indeed the presence or absence of an underlying subject, but due to the fact that the underlying subject is generic in one case, arbitrary in the other case.26

I conclude that the initial appeal of the idea that AgrS is itself the generic subject evaporates when the consequences of the hypothesis are inspected in more detail.

10. Other languages

Other languages that appear to have a null generic pronoun include Marathi, Hebrew, Icelandic, and Brazilian Portuguese.

   (39) Hya khurchi-war aaramani bushushakto. (Marathi)
   this chair -on comfort-with sit-PRES.3SG
   ‘One can sit comfortably in this chair.’

   (40) Yxolim la-ševet be-noxiout ba-kise ha-ze. (Hebrew)
   can-3PL to-sit in-comfort in-the-chair the-this
   ‘One can sit comfortably in this chair.’

   (41) Við Ólaf er ekki talandi. (Icelandic; Sigurðsson 1988: 163)
   with Olaf is not talking
   ‘One can’t talk with Olaf.’

   (42) Aqui não pode nadar. (Brazilian Portuguese)
   here not can swim
   ‘One can’t swim here.’
What Marathi, Hebrew, Icelandic, Brazilian Portuguese and Finnish have in common is that they are only partial null-subject languages: Finnish and Hebrew allow 1st and 2nd person null subjects (Hebrew only in some tenses), Marathi only 2nd person null subjects. Other than the generic case, 3rd person subjects can be null in these languages only when bound by, or construed as logophorically dependent on, a higher subject, or when it is non-referential (for instance the subject of a weather predicate); see footnote 18. Icelandic allows it only when the subject is non-referential. Consistent null-subject languages, somewhat surprisingly, do not have a null generic pronoun, in the strict sense of a null pronoun ‘one’ with 3SG or 3PL agreement and no other morphology. Instead they seem to either use generic ‘you’, with 2SG agreement, as in (43a,b):

(43) a. xsse-k texdem htta l-xamsa-w-settin (Moroccan Arabic)
   need-you work-2SG until the-five-and-sixty
   ‘One has to work until the age of 65.’

    b. Den mporeis na empistefteis kanenan (Greek)
      not can-2SG to trust-2SG anyone
      ‘One can’t trust anyone.’

Or else they use some overt morphology in addition to 3SG or 3PL agreement. Romance languages and (some) Slavic languages make use of (cognates of) the overt reflexive morpheme se (Cinque 1988, Egerland 2004, Rivero & Sheppard 2003).

(44) a. Si deve lavorare fino all’età di 65 anni. (Italian; Egerland 2004)
   ‘One has to work until the age of 65.’

    b. Aqui não se pode nadar. (European Portuguese)
      ‘One can’t swim here.’

Arabic makes use of a medio-passive construction.

(45) La y-usbah-u hunaa. (Standard Arabic)
    not 3-swim.PASS here
    ‘One can’t swim here.’
Possibly *se* or the medio-passive morpheme is itself the generic subject. Alternatively *se* or the medio-passive morpheme licenses a null generic subject. In either case this is making use of overt morphology to derive a GSC, which the partial null-subject languages listed above do not need to resort to.

In Holmberg (to appear – a) I argue that crucial generalization is that the languages which allow a null generic subject do not allow a null 3rd person definite subject, except (for some of the languages) if the subject is bound by, or logophorically dependent on, a higher DP (see footnote 18). The formal explanation I propose in that paper is a parameter: Consistent null-subject languages have a D-feature in T, partial null-subject languages don’t.

I will here put aside the case of the null bound or logophoric subject. Assume that the D-feature in T is a Chomskyan unvalued feature (see section 6). T needs to find a nominal category with valued φ-features to value T’s unvalued φ-features ([uφ]) and a valued D-feature to value T’s unvalued D-feature ([uD]) , and which itself needs a case value, as otherwise it will not be syntactically active, available as a goal for the T-probe (following Chomsky 2000, 2001). Alternatively the unvalued features of T get default feature values. This is a last resort, available only if there is no syntactically active nominal category available as a goal.

The null generic pronoun is potentially syntactically active: We have seen that it is assigned case and values T’s φ-features just like an overt DP, in Finnish. It is, however, not a DP but a φP: a nominal category with valued φ-features but lacking D; see Holmberg (to appear – a). This means that it can only have generic reference. Now if T with a [uD]-feature enters an Agree-relation with a φP, [uD] will remain valueless, causing the derivation to crash on account of containing an unvalued feature. The default valueing option is, by assumption, not open as long as T’s [uφ] are valued by the φP.

This is the reason why consistent null-subject languages have to resort to various overt strategies to express the meaning of generic ‘one’. Consider for example the clitic *se* construction, characteristic of Romance and Slavic null subject languages: I conjecture that *se* is itself the generic subject encoding the subject theta-role, but it is a φ-less category unable to value T’s [uφ]-features. Possibly it has inherent case-value, in which case it would not even be visible to T. This means that T can resort to the default value option.

In Finnish, Brazilian Portuguese, Hebrew, Icelandic, and Marathi T has no [uD]-feature. T can therefore safely enter an Agree-relation with a φP argument. This is the advantage of
having a D-less T. The downside is that it entails more or less severe restrictions on the use of definite null subjects.

References


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The following less common abbreviations are used: ABL: ablative; ADE: adessive; ALL: allative; CON: conditional; ELA: elative; INE: inessive; PAR: partitive; PRC: participle; PX: Possessive suffix; TRA: translative.
Note that this terminology differs from that in the seminal work by Cinque (1988). In that paper Egerland’s generic and arbitrary readings are referred to as two readings of ‘arbitrary pro’ ($pro_{arb}$): the quasi-universal reading and the quasi-existential reading, respectively.

3 The use of 2SG with generic meaning is also not uncommon in colloquial Finnish, and the use of 3PL with arbitrary meaning occurs as well.

(i) Sä saat töitä jos sä puhut saksaa.
   you-SG get-2SG work if you-SG speak-2SG German
   ‘You get a job if you speak German.’

(ii) Ne puhuu Itävallassa saksaa.
    they speak Austria-INE German
    ‘They speak German in Austria.’

4 See Cinque 1988 for a suggested explanation for the (universal) tendency of the quasi-existential reading of $pro_{arb}$ to be interpreted as 1PL. As shown by Löflund 1998 the use of the passive form with specific, active meaning is, in fact, not restricted to the 1PL in Finnish.

5 The controversy concerns whether the so-called passive is a passive or something else. For instance, Blevins (2003) argues that it is a ‘subjectless impersonal’, while Manninen & Nelson (2004) argue that it is a passive. More specifically the question is whether the subject argument is ‘demoted’, hence not syntactically projected, as is characteristic of passives, or whether it is syntactically projected but not spelled out. I will not take a definite stand on the issue in this paper, although I will add some comments in section 9 and footnote 20.

6 The negation is Finnish is an auxiliary which inflects for subject agreement.

7 The passive does not license a subject-oriented anaphor.

(i) Shelliasemalla pestään auto (*-nsa).
    Shell-station-ADE wash-PASS car (-PX)
    ‘A car is being washed at the Shell-station.’

This will be discussed below in section 9.

8 Thanks to Chris Johns for discussing these matters with me.

9 In traditional grammar the nominative object form is sometimes referred to as ‘the second accusative’; see also Reime 1993. It differs from the nominative subject case in that it does not trigger agreement. An(other) argument in favour of taking the bare NP object to be a form of accusative is that [+human] pronominal objects do not exhibit the nominative-accusative variation, but have one distinct accusative object form. An additional complication is that the form marked ‘n is homonymous with the genitive. See Vainikka 2003 for discussion.

10 The referee notes that following complication for this theory: In colloquial Finnish there is no 3PL form distinct from 3SG, yet the object has the accusative form:

(i) Ne ostaa auton/*auto.
    they buy-3 car

But this is expected if there is no requirement that the verb must agree in person and number for accusative case to be triggered. In (i) the verb agrees (overtly) in person only, while number is neutralized.

It seems to me that the imperative provides a more serious challenge: It may optionally have an overt subject, which in that case has nominative form, without this affecting the form of the object. This is OK, were it not for the fact that the imperative verb agrees with the subject, whether it is overt or covert.

(i) Osta (sinä) auto.
    buy-IMP you.SG car-NOM

(ii) Ostakaa (te) auto.
    buy-IMP-PL you.PL car-NOM

We have to restrict the relation between subject agreement and object case to be sensitive to finite verb agreement only, not to the morphologically distinct agreement found in the imperative.

11 There are some subject contexts where the G-pronoun is excluded. For instance, in contrast with (14b), (ii) can only be read as ‘if you are a dog’, not as ‘if you have a dog’.

(i) Minulla on koira.
    I-ADE is dog
    ‘I have a dog.’

(ii) Jos on koira, ...
     if is-3SG dog

Conceivably the reason is that there are two competing derivations in this case, where the one leading to ‘if you are a dog’ wins, perhaps on account of not requiring oblique case on the subject. The following is another case (ABL = ablative):

(i) Shelliasemallan pestänyt auton.
    Shell-station-ADE-wash-PASS car
    ‘A car was being washed at the Shell-station.’
(iii) Kallesta tulee kapteeni.
   Kalle-ABL comes captain
   ‘Kalle will become a captain
(iv) Jos tulee kapteeni, ...
   if comes captain
Here (iv) cannot be read as ‘if one becomes a Captain’, but only as ‘if a Captain comes’. This may, again, be due to the existence of a competing derivation, leading to the same interpretation as (iii), namely (TRA = translativa):
(v) Kalle tulee kapteeniksi.
   Kalle comes captain-TRA
   ‘Kalle will become a captain.’
(vi) Jos tulee kapteeniksi, ...
   if comes captain-TRA
   ‘If one becomes a captain, …’
If so, this has far-ranging consequences for the role of ‘transderivative constraints’ or competing derivations in the grammar: see Holmberg (to appear - b).

12 A 1st or 2nd person pronoun can co-occur with the expletive if the pronoun is not in specIP, but in a focus position, either a low focus position as in (i) or a high one (specCP), as in (ii); see Holmberg (to appear – a) and Holmberg & Nikanne 2002.
(i) Sitää istun minäkin mukavasti tässä.
   EX sit-1SG me-too comfortably here
   I, too, can sit comfortably in this chair.’
(ii) Minä sitää istun aina tässä tuolissa.
   I EX sit always this chair-INE
   ‘Me, I always sit in this chair.’

13 The referee points out that expression such as (11), repeated and slightly modified in (i), are not expected to be well formed under this theory.
(i) Jos/kun ostaa auton Saksassa, …
   if/when buy-3SG car-ACC Germany-INE
   ‘If/when you buy a car in Germany, …’
This is quite general in conditional and temporal clauses. The example shows that the reason is not the absence of a potential topic. A topic can be fronted, or, as the referee notes, an expletive be inserted.
(ii) Jos/kun Saksassa ostaa auton, …
(iii) Jos/kun sitää ostaa auton Saksassa, ...
I have no explanation why conditional and temporal clauses have this exceptional property of allowing specIP to remain empty throughout the derivation.

14 At least humans must be included in the extension of the generic subject. The proposition in (20) can be true of cats and dogs as well, but can’t very well be taken to be true of cats and dogs only. The referee points out that this is another difference between the GSC and the Finnish passive, which can have a non-human and even a non-animate reading. This suggests that the restriction to humans in the GSC is a property of the pronoun.

15 I am sidestepping a host of controversial issues concerning the interpretation of generic expressions; the semantics of the GSC is beyond the scope of this paper. See Moltmann (undated) for a discussion of the semantics of generic one. Krifka & al. (1995) do not take up generic pronouns, but it seems clear that they belong in the category of what they Krifka & al. call characterizing generic expressions rather than kind-denoting expressions, along with indefinite generic NPs, as in A cat has a tail. The GSC shares with characterizing, indefinite generic expressions the property of allowing for exceptions.

16 The problem in (22b) may be that the indeterminate pronoun object is necessarily information focus, which the subject left in situ is as well. If a sentence cannot have two disjoint information foci this is sufficient to rule out (16b).

17 According to Holmberg (to appear – a) the only place we find ‘real’ pro is in languages without agreement, that is without unvalued φ-features, such as Chinese and Japanese.

18 The analysis where the G-pronoun remains in vP is in conflict with Diesing’s (1990) Mapping Hypothesis (as pointed out to me by Mayumi Hosono and Norbert Hornstein). According to Diesing, generic arguments behave like definites, and thus have to move out of VP. If my analysis of the Finnish GSC is right, then the Mapping Hypothesis needs reformulation. What I suggest is that the Mapping Hypothesis is an effect of rules concerning the distribution of focused categories, where focus is dependent on stress/intonation. The G-pronoun, being phonetically null, is then not affected by these rules.
Finnish also has a null 3rd person subject in certain embedded positions. In Holmberg (to appear-a) I characterize it as a logophoric null subject.

(i) Se oli Tarjalle pettymys ettei 0/hän saanut lukea latinaa koulussa.
   it was Tarja-ILL disappointment that-not 0/she could study Latin school-INE
   ‘It was a disappointment to Tarja that she couldn’t study Latin at school.’

In that work I assume that the 3rd person null logophoric subject and the generic subject are one and the same inherently null but φ-featurally specified category which undergoes movement optionally to specTP. When it moves it can only be interpreted as a logophor, when it stays only as generic. In the theory expounded here, I have to assume that the logophor is actually the pronoun hän which is attracted by the EPP and then optionally deleted if there is an appropriate antecedent for it.

Whether there actually is a syntactically projected subject argument in the passive is a question I leave open. The argument from the interplay of agreement and object case (see section 4) cannot be applied, since the passive verb does not agree. The argument from case (see section 5) cannot be applied, since the verbs assigning oblique subject case do not passivize. On the arguments from anaphora and agent-oriented adverbs, see section 9.

The variation between the two forms of the 3 person possessive suffix does not appear to have any syntactic significance. It is subject to much dialectal variation.

Note that there is an alternative word order which is perfectly grammatical:

(i) Voi saada päänsärkyä [auringossa istuessa].
   can get headache sun-INE sit.INF-INE
   ‘You can get a headache sitting in the sun.’

Here the possessive suffix is absent, hence the problem of binding it does not arise. Instead the locative phrase is preposed. This may indicate that the infinitivals with a possessive suffix are construed with a null subject which checks the EPP. When the possessive suffix is absent, so is the null subject, and another argument is fronted to check the EPP. If so, the anaphor which fails to get bound in (27b, 28b, and 29b) is not the possessive suffix but the null subject (contra Trosterud 1993). Alternatively the possessive suffix is an incorporated pronoun which checks the EPP. Thanks to Helena Sulkala for drawing my attention to (i).

The (b)-sentences seem to improve if the adverbial clause is preposed (thanks to Anne Vainikka and Helena Sulkala for pointing this out).

(i) Kysyttyään luvan saa mennä kotiin.
   ask-PRC-PX permission may go home

In the present terms this might be because the necessary reconstruction can somehow circumvent the lack of c-command between the anaphor and the generic subject binder.

This conclusion is actually not compatible with recent work advocating the position that AgrS is an incorporated pronoun, including Platzack (2004) and Alexiadou & Anagnostopoulou (1999). In these works it is argued that the EPP in finite null-subject constructions is satisfied by Agr, obviating the need for pro. See Holmberg (to appear - a) for discussion.

They may have past tense (kannatti) and conditional mood (kannattaaisi). The necessive verbs täytyy ‘must’ and pitäätä ‘should’ do not occur in non-finite form, while kannattaa does occur in infinitival form, as in (i).

(i) Nyt voisi kannattaa ostaa auto.
   now could-buy be-worth car
   ‘It might be worth it now to buy a car.’

Kannattaa also occurs with agreement and a nominative subject with the meaning ‘support’. This, I assume, is a different verb.

Intuitions are quite delicate in cases like (34b) and (35b). In particular, as soon as the sentences is taken to be restricted to a particular time or place, the generic reading becomes possible, and a reflexive possessive becomes possible. For instance (i) is perfectly OK.

(i) Man byggde inte sitt hus på en månad på femtitalet.
   MAN built not REFL house in a month in the fifties
   ‘They/you didn’t build their/your house in a month in the fifties.’

Note that generic ‘you’ is natural in English in this case. I do not at present have any clear idea why an arbitrary subject cannot bind a reflexive.

More correctly, it does not refer, but introduces a variable which needs to be bound by a generic operator.