

# Reflexive Verbs and Anti-causativity in the Finnish Language\*

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The Finnish language has a series of so-called reflexive suffixes. When they are attached to a verbal root, it becomes an intransitive verb. According to the previous studies, intransitive verbs with a reflexive suffix, reflexive verbs henceforth, can indicate three different kinds of meaning, i.e. a reflexive, a passive and an automative meaning. There are considerable differences among these three cases indeed. But the meanings conveyed by different kinds of reflexive verbs are only apparently different from each other. What is common to all of the instances is that a resultant state of the referent of a subject is described and a causative event is not an essential part of the description. This amounts to say that reflexive verbs can be characterized as anti-causatives, irrespective of their accompanying meaning.

## 1. Introduction

The Finnish language has a series of so-called reflexive suffixes, i.e. *-U-*, *-tU*, *-UtU*, *-(V) VntU-* and some others<sup>1</sup>. When they are attached to a verbal root, it becomes an intransitive verb. According to the previous studies, intransitive verbs with a reflexive suffix, reflexive verbs henceforth, can indicate three different kinds of meaning. One of the meanings they indicate is a reflexive relation between an agent and a patient. On the other hand, some reflexive verbs indicate a passive-like meaning. Reflexive verbs can also indicate an automative meaning. 'Automative' means that some event occurs or occurred spontaneously. From a semantic point of view, there are considerable differences among three cases. However, we should not forget that all of the reflexive verbs have the same reflexive suffix, irrespective of their meaning. Then, the purpose of this paper is to show that the meanings conveyed by different kinds of reflexive verbs are only apparently different from each other. I claim that all of the instances of reflexive verbs can be characterized as anti-causatives.

The order of discussion will be as follows: Section 2 overviews the correspondence between intransitive and transitive verbs in general in the Finnish language. Section 3 surveys various instances of reflexive verbs and attempts to illustrate that all the instances of reflexive verbs indicate anti-causativity. Section 4 considers the relationship between reflexive intransitive verbs and their corresponding transitive ones.

## 2. Correspondence between intransitive and transitive verbs

### 2.1 Transitive and intransitive verbs

As has been said above, a reflexive suffix can convert a transitive verb into an intransitive

one. But how should transitive verbs and intransitive ones be defined respectively? Let us begin with the definition of these two types of verbal predicates.

It is not easy to define them, however, because transitivity they have varies gradually. It is indeed possible to decide whether a verb is transitive or not, according to its meaning, but it would be better to define them on the basis of morphological marking, since meanings verbs have are transitional in nature. Thus, in this paper we define transitive verbs as verbal predicates taking two arguments. One of the two arguments functions as a subject and it is usually marked in the nominative case, while the other argument serves as an object, whose case marking can vary among the partitive, the genitive and the nominative case<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, intransitive verbs can be defined as verbal predicates that have only one argument. The sole argument of intransitive verbs is usually marked in the nominative case.

## 2.2 Passive of the Finnish language

The Finnish language has several syntactic ways that can change the valency of verbal predicates<sup>3</sup>. Among them, the passivization is the way that reduces their valency. Take the following for example:

- (1) *Suome-ssa puhu-ta-an hyvin englanti-a.*  
 Finland-INE.SG speak-PASS.PRES well English-PART.SG  
 English is well spoken in Finland.

This is a passive sentence and it corresponds with the following active sentence. That is:

- (2) *Suomalaise-t puhu-vat hyvin englanti-a.*  
 Finn-NOM.PL speak-3PL.PRES well English-PART.SG  
 Finns speak English well.

The predicate of these two sentences, *puhua* 'to speak', is a transitive verb, which takes a nominative subject and a partitive object. The subject of the sentence (2), *suomalaiset* 'Finns', is not overtly expressed in the sentence (1). It is important to note that the subject in question is not simply omitted but entirely suppressed. As a matter of fact, a subject argument of a transitive sentence can never be expressed in a corresponding passive sentence. This means that Finnish passive sentences do not have a subject and therefore they are impersonal. The object of the active sentence (2), on the other hand, is left unchanged in the corresponding passive sentence (1). However, this is not always the case. Take the following for example:

- (3a) *Joku mies kaatoi puun kirvee-llä.*  
 some-NOM.SG man-NOM.SG cut-3SG.PST tree-GEN.SG axe-ADE.SG  
 A man chopped down a tree by an axe.
- (3b) *Puu kaade-tti-in kirvee-llä.*  
 tree-NOM.SG fall-PASS.PST axe-ADE.SG  
 The tree was chopped down by an axe.

The morphological cases used to mark the object of these two sentences are different from each

other. In the impersonal passive sentence (3b) the object is marked not in the genitive case but in the nominative case. One may notice that the nominative is the case that indicates most typically a subject of a sentence. Then, one might wonder whether the nominative argument in (3b) is promoted to a subject or not. In the Finnish language, however, the nominative case is available not only for a subject but also for an object. Moreover, the nominative argument in (3b) does not agree in person and number with the predicate. This means that the argument in question cannot be interpreted as a subject, although it is marked in the nominative case. Thus, it is reasonable to say that the passivization of the Finnish language is a syntactic process that reduces the valency by suppressing a subject of the corresponding active sentence.

It should not be overlooked that even an intransitive sentence can be converted into a corresponding impersonal passive sentence. This is because passive predicates are impersonal. If they are personal, an object of corresponding active predicates should be promoted to a subject in order to fulfill the requirement that they agree in person and number with their subject. This amounts to say that a personal passive sentence cannot be made from an intransitive sentence. But such a restriction does not apply to the Finnish language, since the Finnish passive is impersonal. The following serves as an example.

(4a) *Juhannukse-na suomalaise-t tanssi-vat myöhään yö-hön asti.*  
 Midsummer-ESS.SG Finn-NOM.PL dance-3PL.PRES late night-ILL.SG until  
 At Midsummer Finns dance until late at night.

(4b) *Juhannukse-na tanssi-ta-an myöhään yö-hön asti.*  
 Midsummer-ESS.SG dance-PASS.PRES late night-ILL.SG until  
 At Midsummer people dance until late at night.

The predicate of these sentences is *tanssia* 'to dance', which is an intransitive predicate.

### 2.3 Causative of the Finnish language

Contrary to the passivization, the causativization is a process that increases the valency of predicates. Verbs which undergo the causativization can be either transitive or intransitive. Take the following for example:

(5a) *Keisari raken-si temppeli-n.*  
 emperor-NOM.SG build-3SG.PST temple-GEN.SG  
 The emperor built a temple.

(5b) *Kesari rakennu-tt-i orj-i-lla temppeli-n.*  
 emperor-NOM.SG make someone build-3SG.PST slave-ADE.PL temple-GEN.SG  
 The emperor commanded the slaves to build a temple.

(5c) *Keisari pan-i orja-t rakenta-ma-an temppeli-n.*  
 emperor-NOM.SG make-3SG.PST slave-NOM.PL build-INF(MA).ILL temple-GEN.SG  
 The emperor made the slaves build a temple.

Both the sentences (5b) and (5c) are derived from the sentence (5a), which has two arguments,

*keisari* 'emperor' in the nominative case and *temppeli* 'temple' in the genitive case. On the other hand, in the causative sentences (5b) and (5c) there are one more argument, *orja* 'slave', in addition to the original arguments. This newly introduced argument is, however, indicated differently, in the adessive case in (5b) and in the nominative case in (5c). In the former way of causativization, a causative predicate is derived from a corresponding non-causative predicate by adding a suffix *-ttA-* to its stem. Such a predicate is called a curative verb (*teettoverbi* in Finnish). On the other hand, in the latter way of causativization, the causativity is expressed by introducing an additional predicate. The newly introduced predicate in (5c) is a causative verb *panna* 'to make' and it agrees in person and number with the subject. In addition, the non-causative predicate in (5a) is converted into a third infinitive in (5c). The newly introduced argument, *orja* 'slave', can be interpreted semantically as a subject of the third infinitive *rakentamaan* indeed. But it should be regarded as an object of the causative verb *panna*. This is the reason the newly introduced argument is marked in the nominative case, which is available also for the object.

Another difference between two types of causative sentence is that in the former a newly introduced argument can be omitted, while it should be overtly expressed in the latter type of sentence. What is important to note is that the nominative subject, *keisari* 'emperor', of both of the sentences (5b) and (5c) is a causer rather than an agent. In other words, the referent of the nominative subject did not 'construct a temple' by himself. What functions as an agent is the newly introduced argument. But it is not a volitional agent, since it functions also as a causee by contrast with a nominative causer argument.

#### 2.4 Alternation between intransitive and transitive verbs

The causative suffix *-ttA-* mentioned above can also be used to convert an intransitive verb into a transitive one. Compare the following two sentences:

(6a) *Hän herä-si herätyskello-n soitto-on.*  
 he-NOM wake up-3SG.PST alarm-clock-GEN.SG ringing-ILL.SG  
 He was woken by the alarm-clock.

(6b) *Herätyskello herä-tt-i häne-t kuude-lta.*  
 alarm-clock-NOM.SG wake up-3SG.PST he-ACC six-ABL.SG  
 The alarm-clock woke him up at six.

The verb *herätä* 'to wake up' in (6a) is intransitive and corresponds with the verb *herättää*, which is transitive and contains the causative suffix *-ttA-*. In this case a transitive verb is derived from an intransitive verb by adding the causative suffix to the stem of the latter.

On the other hand, there are cases where an intransitive verb is derived from a transitive one. In this case what is attached to the stem of a transitive verb is a reflexive suffix. Take the following for example:

(7a) *Hän ava-si nopeasti ove-n ja sulk-i se-n*  
 he-NOM open-3SG.PST quickly door-GEN.SG and close-3SG.PST it-GEN.SG

*pamahta-e-n.*

bang-INF(E).INS

He opened the door quickly and closed it with a bang.

- (7b) *Ovi sulke-utu-i pamahta-e-n häne-n jälkee-nsä.*  
 door-NOM.SG close-3SG.PST bang-INF(E).INS he-3SG.GEN. after-3SG.PX  
 The door closed with a bang behind him.

The verb *sulkeutua* ‘to close’ in (7b) is intransitive and is derived from a corresponding transitive verb *sulkea* in (7a) by adding *-utu-* to the stem of the latter.

Thus, as regards the alternation between intransitive and transitive verbs, the Finnish language has derivational processes in both directions. According to Haspelmath (1993) and Nichols et al. (2004), the world languages are different from each other as to the derivational direction they have. For example, most European languages have a strong preference for a derivation from a transitive verb to an intransitive one. Unlike these languages, Finnish can derive verbs in both directions almost equally, although the derivation of transitive verbs from intransitive ones is slightly more prevalent.

### 3. Reflexive verbs in the Finnish language

#### 3.1 Classification of reflexive verbs

Let us now turn to the main topic of this paper, that is to say, reflexive verbs in the Finnish language. Reflexive verbs contain one of the reflexive suffixes, which convert a transitive verb into an intransitive one. Therefore, reflexive verbs are intransitive by definition. According to Kulonen-Korhonen (1985), Koivisto (1991), Siitonen (1999) and Hakulinen et al. (2004: 330–333), reflexive verbs can be classified into three sub-groups according to their meaning<sup>4</sup>. The three sub-groups are reflexive, passive and automative. The following are a few random examples:

- (8) *Tyttö pese-yty-i nopeasti.*  
 girl-NOM.SG wash oneself-3SG.PST quickly  
 The girl washed herself quickly.
- (9) *Tyttö siirt-y-i toise-lle tuoli-lle.*  
 girl-NOM.SG move-3SG.PST other-ALL.SG chair-ALL.SG  
 The girl moved to another chair. (Siitonen 1999: 89)
- (10) *Vesi tunke-utu-u venee-seen.*  
 water-NOM.SG force one’s way-3SG.PRES boat-ILL.SG  
 Water rushes into the boat. (Koivisto 1995: 42)
- (11) *Vene tempa-utu-i virra-n vie-tä-vä-ksi.*  
 boat-NOM.SG be carried away-3SG.PST current-GEN.SG bring-PASS-PTCP(VA)-TRA  
 The boat was carried away by the current. (Ibid.)

- (12) *Puu kaat-u-i myrsky-ssä.*  
 tree-NOM.SG fall-3SG.PST storm-INE.SG  
 The tree fell down in the storm.
- (13) *Puu kaat-u-i kirvee-llä.*  
 tree-NOM.SG fall-3SG.PST axe-ADE.SG  
 The tree was chopped down by an axe. (Siitonen 1999: 89)
- (14) *Kirja käänt-y-y suome-sta ruotsi-ksi.*  
 book-NOM.SG turn-3SG.PRES Finnish-ELA.SG Swedish-TRA.SG  
 The book is translated from Finnish into Swedish. (Koivisto 1995: 44)

The sentences (8) and (9) are instances having a reflexive meaning. The sentences (10)–(12) are automative, while the sentences (13)–(14) have a passive-like meaning. Among these three sub-groups there are some differences. According to Siitonen (1999) the differences can be schematized as follows:

|                        | reflexive      | automative       | passive               |
|------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| subject                | mostly animate | mostly inanimate | mostly inanimate      |
| agent                  | = subject      | doesn't exist    | not overtly expressed |
| volitionality of agent | volitional     |                  | mostly volitional     |

We will take up below these sub-groups one by one.

### 3.2 Reflexive verbs having an automative meaning

Let us start with reflexive verbs that have an automative meaning. The sentences (10)–(12) above are a few random examples of the automative usage. ‘Automative’ means that some event occurs or occurred spontaneously. Just like in the passive-like usage treated below, the subject of reflexive verbs in this usage is a patient. But no volitional agent is entailed in this case. The described event is brought about by some natural force, for example, rather than caused by some volitional agent.

This usage has been called ‘automative’ in the traditional grammar of the Finnish language. However, what the term ‘automative’ means is almost the same as what is referred to by the term ‘anti-causative’ (Koivisto 1995: 38). The anti-causativization is a reverse process of the causativization. It has long been discussed since Nedjalkov and Sil'nickij (1969) first introduced this term. According to Kulikov (2001), the anti-causative can be defined as follows:

- (15) The label anticausative is used to refer to the non-causative member of the opposition in the case where the directions of semantic (‘Vo’ → ‘CAUSE Vo’) and formal derivation do not match, i.e. in those instances where the non-causative is morphologically more complex than the causative. (Kulikov 2001: 888)

The anti-causativization reduces the valency of transitive predicates. Then, anti-causatives are

intransitive predicates by definition.

### 3.3 Reflexive verbs having a reflexive meaning

Let's now turn to another usage. As the term 'reflexive' suggests, some reflexive verbs have naturally a reflexive meaning. Take the sentence (8), repeated here as the sentence (16) for convenience, for example:

- (16) *Tyttö pese-yty-i nopeasti.*  
 girl-NOM.SG wash oneself-3SG.PST quickly  
 The girl washed herself quickly.

A reflexive verb having a reflexive meaning indicates a reflexive relation between an agent and a patient. For example, in the sentence (16), the agent of 'washing' is the referent of the subject, *tyttö* 'girl', and the patient of 'washing' is the same entity. In other words, in this sentence, the subject of the verb in question functions not only as an agent but also as a patient. What should be noticed here is that the patient itself is not overtly expressed, although its existence is strongly entailed. Then, the verb in question is not transitive but intransitive.

As the referent of a subject in this usage is usually an animate entity, the described event seems to be an action caused by a volitional agent. However, a closer examination reveals that this is not always the case. For example:

- (17) *Kun normaali-ihoinen pese-yty-y saippua-n kera,*  
 when normal-skinned-NOM.SG wash oneself-3SG.PRES soap-GEN.SG with  
*ihon rasva-t pese-yty-vät osittain pois.*  
 skin-GEN.SG fat-NOM.PL wash oneself-3SG.PRES partly off  
 When a normal-skinned person washes himself with soap, skin fats are partly washed off. (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 330)

In this sentence the verb *peseytyä* 'to wash oneself' is used twice. In the subordinate clause the subject of the verb is animate indeed, but the matrix subject is inanimate. Then, the second instance of the verb *peseytyä* should be interpreted to be automative rather than to be reflexive. It is important to note that what the subordinate clause of this sentence describes is prerequisite for the content described in the matrix clause. This means that the subordinate clause is describing a resultant state rather than an action by an animate volitional agent.

When a verb is reflexive, an agent and a patient should refer to an identical entity. But this is not true of the following sentence. That is:

- (18) *Kärppä pure-utu-i saalii-nsa kurkku-un.*  
 ermine-NOM.SG bite firmly on-3SG.PST prey-GEN.SG-3PX throat-ILL.SG  
 The ermine bit firmly on the throat of a prey. (Koivisto 1995: 41)

In this sentence the subject, *kärppä* 'ermine', is animate and 'to bite firmly on the throat of a prey' can be regarded as a volitional action of the referent of the subject. However, the patient of this action is not the referent of the subject itself. Then, the question is why the reflexive verb, *pureutua* 'to bite firmly on', is used in this sentence. As a matter of fact, what is described

in this sentence is not the 'ermine's biting'. The 'ermine clung to the throat of a prey' as a consequence of 'biting' by the 'ermine' itself. In other words, this sentence describes a resultant state of the referent of the subject after it 'had bitten on the throat of a prey'.

From what has been said above, it follows that reflexive verbs having a reflexive meaning do not necessarily mean an action by a volitional agent. At least in some instances what is described is a resultant state brought about by some action of the referent of a subject. In fact, this observation can also be applied to more typical instances of this usage. For example, the sentence (16) can be interpreted to be expressing a resultant state, since it cannot co-occur with a purposive clause and its predicate cannot express a progressive meaning. If one must express an action itself by a volitional agent, one should use the reflexive pronoun, as is exemplified in the following sentence:

- (19) *Tyttö pes-i itse-nsä nopeasti.*  
 girl-NOM.SG wash-3SG.PST oneself-GEN.SG-3PX quickly  
 The girl washed herself quickly.

In this sentence the patient of 'washing' is overtly expressed by the reflexive pronoun. If what reflexive verbs having a reflexive meaning express is a resultant state in fact, the difference between this usage and automative usage is much smaller than it seems to be. Rather, they are common in that both of them express a resultant state brought about by a preceding causal event.

### 3.4 Reflexive verbs having a passive meaning

Let us now consider the third usage of reflexive verbs. Some reflexive verbs can indicate a passive-like meaning, as is shown from the sentence (13), repeated here as the sentence (20) for convenience. That is:

- (20) *Puu kaat-u-i kirvee-llä.*  
 tree-NOM.SG fall-3SG.PST axe-ADE.SG  
 The tree was chopped down by an axe. (Siitonen 1999: 89)

In this sentence the subject, *puu* 'tree', is not an agent but a patient. In traditional grammar sentences like (20) are sometimes treated as personal passive sentences, since their subject corresponds to an object of active sentences and agrees in person and number with a reflexive predicate. Moreover, what is described in sentences like (20) is a resultant state brought about by an action described in corresponding active sentences. Thus, there seem to be good reasons to say sentences like (20) are personal passive sentences.

However, the Finnish language has impersonal passive sentences. Then, we should first compare sentences like (20) with impersonal passive sentences. Take the following for example:

- (21) *Puu kaade-tti-in kirvee-llä.*  
 tree-NOM.SG fall-PASS.PST axe-ADE.SG  
 The tree was chopped down by an axe. (=3b)

This sentence is an impersonal passive sentence. In impersonal passive sentences an agent of

a preceding action cannot be expressed overtly, but the existence of a human agent is strongly entailed. This entailment is kept unchanged even without *kirveellä* ‘by axe’.

On the other hand, reflexive verbs in a passive-like meaning do not have such a strong entailment. Reflexive verbs having a passive-like meaning cannot co-occur with an agent, either<sup>5</sup>. But the existence of a human agent is not prerequisite for the passive-like usage of reflexive predicates. If *kirveellä* ‘by axe’ is omitted from the sentence (20), for example, it has more room for interpretation. That ‘the tree fell down because someone had cut it’ is a possible interpretation indeed. But it is an equally possible interpretation that ‘the tree fell down because of a strong storm’. This means that an agent of a preceding action as well as an action itself is irrelevant to reflexive verbs in a passive-like meaning. Moreover, reflexive verbs in a passive-like meaning cannot co-occur with a purposive clause. If this is the case, it is not appropriate to regard sentences like (20) as personal passive sentences. They merely express a resultant state, irrespective of the nature of a preceding causal event.

What should be noticed here is that the difference between this usage and automative one is also small again. If one likes to specify a cause of ‘falling of the tree’, one can say as follows:

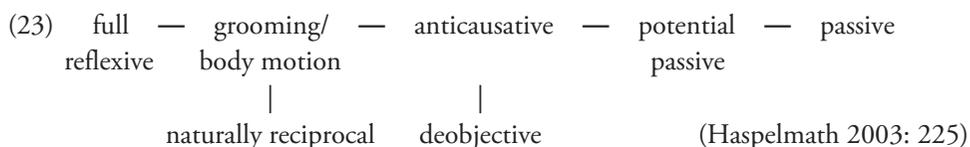
- (22) *Puu kaat-u-i myrsky-ssä.*  
 tree-NOM.SG fall-3SG.PST storm-INE.SG  
 The tree fell down in the storm. (=12)

In this sentence what counts as a cause of a resultant state is not a human agent but a natural force. Then, the sentence (22) should be classified into an automative sub-group rather than into a passive-like one.

### 3.5 Reflexive verbs and anti-causativization

From what has been said above, it follows that there are considerable differences among three cases. However, the meanings conveyed by different kinds of reflexive verbs are only apparently different from each other. First of all, what is described by reflexive verbs indicating a reflexive relation is not an action caused by a volitional agent but a resultant state brought about by the same action. Thus, the subject of these verbs is a patient rather than an agent. If this is the case, the differences among three cases are much smaller than they seem to be. Moreover, whether or not a described event is caused by a volitional agent is essentially irrelevant to reflexive verbs, as is evident from the discussion above. What is common to all of the three cases discussed above is that a resultant state of the referent of a subject is described and a causative event is not an essential part of the description. This amounts to say that reflexive verbs can be characterized as anti-causatives.

According to Haspelmath (2003), the concept ‘anti-causative’ can be mapped among other neighboring concepts, such as ‘reflexive’, ‘passive’ and so on. The semantic map Haspelmath (2003) proposed is as follows:



It is not always the case where each concept is represented by a unique form. This means that one and the same form can represent some neighboring concepts. For example, the reflexive pronoun of the Russian language can be used not only in an anti-causative meaning but also in many other meanings like a passive and a reciprocal meaning. Based upon a traditional interpretation, it is possible to say that reflexive verbs in the Finnish language can also refer to some neighboring concepts, such as 'body action' and 'passive', besides 'anti-causative', though the range of the meaning reflexive verbs can represent is much narrower than the Russian reflexive pronoun, for example. However, as has been mentioned above, various usages of reflexive verbs can be interpreted equally as an instance of anti-causative. If this is the case, the range of the meaning reflexive verbs express is even narrower than it seems to be.

#### 4. Reflexive verbs and corresponding transitive verbs

Reflexive verbs are anti-causative, and therefore intransitive by definition. Each of them has a corresponding transitive verb. However, there is much debate as to the way an anti-causative verb is derived from a corresponding transitive one.

According to Koontz-Garboden (2009), for example, anti-causative verbs are potentially transitive, since they contain a causative predicate in their lexical conceptual structure. That is:

$$(24) [x=y \text{ CAUSE } [y \text{ BECOME } [y \text{ BE AT-z}]]]$$

In this lexical conceptual structure, the existence of a causer (x) of a causative predicate (CAUSE) is entailed, even if it is not overtly expressed and it refers to the same entity as an agent (y) of a subordinate predicate (BECOME). On the other hand, Levin & Rappaport-Hovav (1995), for example, argues that a causer of a causative predicate is totally suppressed, as is shown in (25). That is:

$$(25) [x \text{ CAUSE } [y \text{ BECOME } [y \text{ BE AT-z}]]]$$

$\phi$

Therefore, according to this hypothesis, anti-causative verbs are substantially intransitive.

One of the arguments which supports the former hypothesis is that anti-causative predicates can co-occur with a reflexive expression. As a reflexive expression requires a co-referential antecedent, a causer argument should exist in the lexical conceptual structure of anti-causative predicates. For example:

(26) *Katulamppu*                      *kaat- $\bar{u}$ -i*                      *itse-stä-än*                      *auto-n*                      *pää-lle*.  
 street lamp-NOM.SG fall-3SG.PST REFL-ELA.SG-3PX car-GEN.SG on  
 The street lamp fell down on a car by itself.

But the reflexive pronoun of the Finnish language can co-occur with verbs other than anti-causative ones. Take the following for example:

- (27) *Tämä auto osa-a hätätilantee-ssa aja-a*  
 this-NOM.SG car-NOM.SG can-3SG.PRES emergency-INE.SG drive-INF(A)  
*itse-stä-än.*  
 REFL-ELA.SG-3PX  
 This car can drive by itself in emergency.

Then, it is difficult to decide which is a better hypothesis based solely upon the fact that reflexive verbs can co-occur with a reflexive expression.

Moreover, there is another possibility. Both of the two hypotheses mentioned above presuppose that there is a derivational relation between an anti-causative predicate and a corresponding transitive one. However, it is also possible that the relation between them is not so simple that the former cannot be simply derived from the latter by a morpho-syntactic procedure. What should be noticed here is that the semantic role of the sole argument of an anti-causative predicate may be a theme rather than a patient, since sentences containing an anti-causative predicate express a resultant state. On the other hand, the argument in question functions as a patient in corresponding transitive sentences. If this is the case, sentences containing an anti-causative predicate are not direct equivalents of corresponding transitive sentences.

## 5. Concluding remarks

In this paper we have surveyed various usages of reflexive verbs of the Finnish language. Through this survey it becomes clear that reflexive verbs express primarily the anti-causativity, even though some of the instances may entail a reflexive relation. What is described in sentences containing a reflexive verb is not an action by some agent but a resultant state of that action. Therefore, the sole argument of these sentences functions as a theme rather than an agent or a patient. In many languages a form indicating the anti-causativity can also mean some neighboring concepts. But the range of the meaning reflexive verbs of the Finnish language can indicate is much narrower than other languages.

### Notes

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- 1 Cognate reflexive suffixes have a wide distribution among Baltic-Finnic languages. The Estonian language has similar suffixes, too. However, they are not native to it but were introduced from the Finnish language at around the beginning of the 20th century. For further details of reflexive suffixes of the Finnish language, see Kulonen-Korhonen (1985), Koivisto (1991), Hakulinen et al. (2004: 329–347) for example. On reflexive suffixes in Baltic-Finnic languages, see Koivisto (1995). For the development of reflexive suffixes in the Estonian language, see Huhta (2004).
- 2 As regards nominals other than personal pronouns, the so-called accusative case is identical in form with the genitive case in the singular and the nominative case in the plural. Then, in this paper, I do not regard the accusative case as one of the morphological cases of the Finnish language.

- 3 For further details of syntactic processes changing the valency in the Finnish language, see Pylkkänen (2008) for example.
- 4 For a more elaborated classification of various meanings conveyed by reflexive verbs, see Koivisto (1995) for example.
- 5 A reflexive verb having a passive-like meaning can co-occur with an agent indeed. But it is always indicated in an oblique case. Take the following for example:
- i) *Mei-ltä hoit-u-vat iso-t ja piene-t tilaisuude-t kokemukse-lla.*  
 we-ABL be handled-3PL.PRES big-NOM.PL and small-NOM.PL occasion-NOM.PL experience-ADE.SG  
 Big and small occasions can be handled by our experience. (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1279)
- In this sentence the agent is marked in the ablative case, which is not the case available for a subject and an object.

### Abbreviations

|                         |                        |                     |                     |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| “1,2,3”—person          | ABL—ablative           | ACC—accusative      | ADE—adessive        |
| ALL—allative            | ELA—elative            | ESS—essive          | GEN—genitive        |
| ILL—illative            | INE—inessive           | INF(A)—A-infinitive | INF(E)—E-infinitive |
| INF(MA)—MA-infinitive   | INS—instrumental       | NOM—nominative      | PART—partitive      |
| PASS—impersonal passive | PL—plural              | PRES—present        | PST—past            |
| PX—possessive suffix    | REFL—reflexive pronoun | SG—singular         | TRA—translative     |
| PTCP(VA)—VA-participle  |                        |                     |                     |

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