

## **Is there a future for the Finnish comitative? Arguments against the putative synonymy of the comitative case *-ine* and the postposition *kanssa***

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### **1. Introduction**

The core meaning of the comitative is Accompaniment, although cross-linguistically the same form can also be used for encoding Instrument or Possession, for example. The comitative is prototypically used to combine two nominal phrases which represent two human participants in a situation where one is accompanying the other. This relationship is not symmetrical: one of the participants in the situation is the main actor, so called accompanee, while the other, the companion, is more marginal and can be involved in the action only indirectly, i.e. through the accompanee. (Stolz et al. 2006: 5; 2009: 602f.)

Across languages, Accompaniment can be expressed by adpositions, case affixes and serial constructions, among other means (Stolz et al. 2009: 602f.). In Finnish, the principal means are an inflectional case and several postpositions governing the genitive case. The comitative case marker is *-ine*, which, when

attached to a noun, is obligatorily followed by a possessive suffix that refers (in most cases) to the accompanee. The case marker is formally a plural since the plural marker *-i-* has been grammaticalized as a part of the affix. Yet the comitative is attached to nouns referring to both singular and plural entities, as in (1). Among the postpositions expressing Accompaniment, the most frequent one is *kanssa* ‘with’, as in (2).

- (1) *He asuvat nyt Sydney-ssä laps-ine-en (...)*.<sup>1</sup>  
 they live now Sydney-INES child-COM-POSS.3  
 ‘They live now in Sydney with their child(ren).’

- (2) *Olga asui yksin piene-n lapse-nsa kanssa (...)*.  
 Olga lived alone small-GEN child-GEN;POSS.3 with  
 ‘Olga lived alone with her small child.’

A note on terminology is in order here. When discussing the comitative, it is essential to keep in mind the distinction between the form and the meaning and to uphold it by an unequivocal terminology. ‘Cases’ like accusative or comitative stand primarily for formal entities, and they may be formulated more

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<sup>1</sup> All the examples stem from the HS2000 corpus (Pajunen 2003), if not mentioned otherwise. As the focus of this paper is on declension, only the nominals will be glossed morphologically in detail. The verb forms will only be given the corresponding translations.

explicitly as N-ACC and N-COM. Cases (or case-forms) express several meanings, of which some are more prototypical than others. For instance, N-ACC = Patient and N-COM = Accompaniment. The same or slightly different meanings may be expressed either by case-forms N-CASE or by adpositional constructions ADP + N (including, as in Finnish, postpositional constructions N-GEN + POSTP). Because comitative and Accompaniment stand, respectively, for a form and for a meaning, they are never interchangeable. Moreover, because comitative and ADP + N are two distinct types of formal entities, they should never be confused, even if they occasionally express one and the same meaning.

It has been claimed that the comitative case *-ine* and the *kanssa* construction are synonymous. The common view seems to be that the case expresses (almost) the same meaning as *kanssa* and hence it is often replaced in the usage by the postposition. Furthermore, claims with a similar purport have also been made in research literature (e.g. Karlsson 1982: 132; Sorjanen 1995: 60; Haarala et al. 1990-1994: s.v. *kanssa*; partly also Hakulinen et al. 2004: 942f., 1211f.). The assumption seems to be that having become unproductive (cf. Grünthal 2003: 27), the inflectional comitative is now giving way to the postposition (e.g. Stolz et al. 2005: 214; 2006: 61). However, there seems to be no data about the similarities and differences in the actual usage of the

comitative case and the postposition *kanssa* to support these claims.

The main goal of this paper is to expand on the view of the relationship between the Finnish inflectional comitative case *-ine* and the postpositional construction with *kanssa* by examining the actual usage of the two constructions in corpus data. The argumentation is based on the 31-million-word newspaper corpus HS2000 (Pajunen 2003) which includes the volumes 2000 and 2001 of Finland's leading national newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*.<sup>2</sup> All the edited texts published in the newspaper are included in the corpus: not only the actual news but also reviews, columns, recipes, sports, television and radio guide, readers' letters, etc. Thus, the corpus represents a wide repertoire of written standard Finnish.

The corpus includes 4 648 phrases with the comitative case, with a total of 6 752 nominals inflected in comitative, and 23 286 N-GEN + *kanssa* constructions. My data, which will hereafter be referred as the corpus sample, consist of the first 2000 sentences of the corpus that contain the comitative case and the first 1000 sentences that contain the *kanssa* construction (see also Sirola 2008, a pilot research project with a smaller sample). Since the observations rest on data from written language, phenomena of spoken language are beyond the scope of this paper. Thus, for instance, the spoken variant *kaa*, which may currently be in the process of being grammaticalized from the source form (the

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hs.fi/english/about/> (Accessed 7.3.2011.)

postposition *kanssa*) into a new inflectional comitative case (e.g. Laitinen & Lehtinen 1997: 7f.; Hakulinen et al. 2004: 164, 1213f.; Jaakola 1997: 128), will not be discussed here.<sup>3</sup> The classification of the functions that are expressed by the comitative case and the *kanssa* construction in the corpus sample comes from the corpus analysis of the author's dissertation study (Sirola-Belliard, in preparation) on which this paper is based.

This paper suggests, based on the corpus data, that the claims made in the literature about the synonymy of the comitative case and the *kanssa* postposition, as well as the replacement of the former with the latter, are questionable. Section 2 addresses the assumption of unproductivity of the Finnish comitative case and shows that the case is still in productive use. Section 3 discusses the possibility that the comitative would be giving way to the postposition *kanssa*, showing that there is no evidence to support the idea of replacement. Section 4 examines the claim that there is a considerable overlap in the functional domains of the *kanssa* construction and the comitative case. In order to show that this claim is ill-founded, Section 5 introduces three main differences in the usage of the case and the postposition, related to reciprocal action, animacy hierarchy, and meronymic and hyponymic relations. Section 6 shows the differences in the functional domains of the two constructions, and

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<sup>3</sup> There is the same kind of process behind the comitatives in the other Balto-Finnic languages, too (ALFE 1: map 107; for a summary of the literature see also Sirola 2008: 20-41).

Section 7 summarizes the main conclusions of the paper.

## **2. Has the comitative become unproductive?**

Claims to the effect that the comitative is being replaced by the *kanssa* construction generally only suggest one reason for this change: the putative unproductive nature of the Finnish comitative. Accordingly, the first claim that I wish to address in this paper can be formulated as follows: “The Finnish inflectional comitative case *-ine* is unproductive and is in the process of being replaced by the construction with the postposition *kanssa*.”

This claim can be found in the literature mainly implicitly, but it has also been explicitly stated. For example, Grünthal (2003: 27) presents a table illustrating the inflectional case system in the Finnic languages, with a side note that the Finnish comitative is “no longer a productive case”.

It is true that the comitative is a very infrequent case in Finnish: for example in the HS2000 corpus, only 0.02 % of all the words (0.06 % of all the nominals and 0.14 % of the inflected nominals) carry the comitative case, while e.g. the most common local cases (cf. Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1179) *inessive*, *elative* and *illative* appear in the corpus, respectively, in 2.4 %, 1.7 % and 1.9 % of all the

words; 6.5 %, 4.5 % and 5.3 % of all the nominals; and 15.7 %, 10.8 % and 12.8 % of the inflected nominals (for the distribution of all the Finnish cases, see Pajunen 2010: 492f.). This is probably partly due to the fact that the Finnish comitative can only be used on nouns, adjectives and, under certain conditions, on pronouns, whereas it cannot be used on infinitives, for instance.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the more important reason for the low frequency is the relatively exiguous need for the expression of the comitative's prototypical function, Accompaniment. Also the exiguous proportion of the *kanssa* postposition (0.07 % of all the words in the corpus) indicates the infrequency of the function altogether. Nevertheless, there does not seem to have been any real change here, since the comitative has always been a rare case in Finnish (Häkkinen 1994: 208).

An interesting comparison can be made to the comitative case in Estonian (cf. Erelt et al. 1993: 56, 70, 95f., 115; 1995: 60), a closely related language, where the comitative is used in a much wider range of functions than in Finnish and where, in addition, many verbs govern the comitative case, unlike in

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<sup>4</sup> When used as an attribute of a noun, the comitative can be applied to the plural demonstrative pronouns (cf. Hakulinen et al. 2004: 1208, 1211) as well as to some of the quantifying pronouns, such as *eräs* > *erä-ine* 'one, certain', *kaikki* > *kaikk-ine* 'all', *muutama* > *muutam-ine* 'couple, a few', *moni* > *mon-ine* 'many', *muu* > *mu-ine* 'other' and *usea* > *use-ine* 'several', which can be found in the HS2000 corpus. Two different pronouns, *kaikki* and *muu*, are found in the corpus with a possessive suffix attached: *kaikk-ine-en* (*kaikki*-COM-POSS.3; 82 examples), *kaikk-ine-nsa* (*kaikki*-COM-POSS.3; 13 examples) and *mu-ine-en* (*muu*-COM-POSS.3; 2 examples, both within the expression "*N-COM sun mu-ine-en*" 'with N and whatnot').

Finnish. While in HS2000 corpus there are 0.15 comitative phrases per 1000 words, the morphologically disambiguated corpus of Estonian includes 13.9 comitative phrases per 1000 words, and the quantity seems to be roughly the same in the newspaper *Postimees*.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the difference in the frequencies is not necessarily a sign of a difference in the productivity but it rather reflects a difference in the functional domains of the comitative case in the two languages.

Many different definitions of productivity occur in the literature. Since Grünthal (2003) does not specify what he means by it, I will offer here one possible, simplified definition, based on Bauer (2001: 11-32): a morphological category can be called productive if the group of the words to which it applies is open. On the basis of the HS2000 corpus, it can be argued that the Finnish comitative case *is* a productive category because it applies to new words – in this case nouns and adjectives. This is strongly suggested by e.g. the examples (3) and (4):

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<sup>5</sup> Morphologically disambiguated corpus of Estonian is a 0.5-million-word corpus including Estonian fiction, translated fiction, journalistic texts, legal texts and reference texts (<http://www.cl.ut.ee/korpused/morfkorpus/>). The table of the morpho-syntactic categories provides the frequencies for all the different categories, including the cases (<http://www.cl.ut.ee/korpused/morfliides/seletus>).

*Postimees* is the leading Estonian newspaper according to the circulation numbers (the situation on 7.3.2011, <http://www.eall.ee/members.html>). The 33-million-word corpus of *Postimees* consists of the issues from November 1995 until October 2000 (<http://www.cl.ut.ee/korpused/segakorpus/postimees/>), and with *Keeleveeb* corpus query one can search for sentences including certain lemmas, word-classes or grammatical categories (<http://www.keeleveeb.ee/>). The query does not provide exact frequencies for the grammatical categories, and hence, only a rough comparison can be made here.



- (3) *Sabela Grime kampaukse-nsa* "afropullistum-ine-en" *on*  
 Sabela Grimeshairdo-GEN;POSS.3 afro.bulge-COM-POSS.3 is  
*jouko-n ilonpitäjä ja koomikko (...).*  
 group-GEN merry-maker and comic  
 'Sabela Grimes with the "afro bulge(s)" of her hairdo is the merry-maker  
 and the comic of the group.'

- (4) *Mary asuu vaaleanpunaise-ssa satulinna-ssa*  
 Mary lives light.red-INES fairytale.castle-INES  
*puudele-ine-en ja puolialastom-ine latinouroks-ine-en.*  
 poodle-COM-POSS.3 and half.naked-COM Latino.male-COM-  
 POSS.3  
 'Mary lives in a pink fairytale castle with her poodle(s) and her half-  
 naked Latino lover(s).'

Examples involving such contemporary vocabulary clearly show that the use of the comitative is not restricted to a closed class of 'petrified' expressions (as suggested also by Jaakola & Tommola 2000: 97; Vilkuna 2000: 81).

When observing all the nouns inflected in the comitative in the whole

HS2000 corpus, it can be noted that out of the total of 5 625 nouns that are in the comitative case and have a possessive suffix attached, there are 2 873 different lexemes used. Out of these, 2 138 lexemes occur only once. This can hardly be called a usage mainly in fixed expressions.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the corpus disproves the claim that the comitative should have become unproductive. In addition, the productivity of the case manifests itself in the fact that the comitative is not only used in its prototypical function of Accompaniment but also widely beyond it in extended functions (cf. Sirola-Belliard, in preparation), as will be seen in the next section.

### **3. Is the comitative giving way?**

If one assumes that the comitative case has become unproductive and is restricted to petrified expressions only, one also has to assume that there is some substitute for the case. This has been explicitly argued for, e.g., in the

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<sup>6</sup> For a comparison: the morphologically disambiguated corpus of Estonian includes 7 149 nouns in comitative, among which there are 2 508 different lexemes used (Kaalep 2009: 415). This makes 2.85 comitative tokens per one lexeme, while in HS2000 there are 1.96 N-COM-POSS tokens per one lexeme. If it is agreed that the Estonian comitative is not limited to fixed expression, the higher number of lexemes in HS2000 suggests that the Finnish comitative has the same characteristic. (In the comparison, it has been taken into account that in Estonian the attributes do not agree in comitative and that only the last word of a coordination is inflected in comitative.)

*World Atlas of Language Structures* (henceforth *WALS*): “In recent years, the [Finnish] inflectional comitative has been giving way to an alternative construction with the postposition *kanssa* ‘with’ governing the genitive case.” (Stolz et al. 2005: 214.) This quotation contains two questionable points.

First, the reference to “recent years” seems strange. It is audacious to make a claim about a diachronic change without strong quantitative evidence, particularly if the time scale is said to be short, as “recent years” would suggest. If the relation between the comitative and the *kanssa* construction has changed over the years, it is more likely to have been a long-lasting process. After all, Finnish linguists have discussed the relation and the appropriate use of the comitative case and the postposition *kanssa* since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Krohn 1871; Aminoff 1872; Ahlqvist 1873). The only development concerning the postposition *kanssa* that is mentioned in the Finnish literature on the topic deals with the grammaticalization process in which *kanssa* is developing into a shortened form *kaa* in the spoken Finnish language, but this can hardly be called “recent”. To be sure, *kaa/ka* can already be found in the Finnish dialect atlas of Kettunen (1940: map 117; main part of the data on which the atlas is based have been gathered already in the 1920s). Moreover, there is as yet no detailed research on the phenomenon, and so it would be premature to make any further conclusions concerning the relationship between *-ine* and *kaa*.

Thus, it is not clear what Stolz et al. refer to when they mention “recent years”, just as it is not clear what they mean by “giving way”. This idea of a diachronic change recurs in their other publications. In their monograph they argue for it by stating that *kanssa* “has been taking over many functions formerly fulfilled by the inflectional case” (Stolz et al. 2006: 61). Unfortunately, they present no evidence in support of their claim. Nor does Nau (1995: 133), to whom they refer, offer any evidence, apart from stating that the use of comitative is limited today and that it is more customary to use postpositions (*kanssa*, *kerä*, *mukana*, *myötä*) or postpositional expressions (*seurassa* ‘in the company of’, *yhdessä* ‘together with’), *kanssa* being the principal means of expression. When it comes to the functions “formerly fulfilled” by the comitative and now “taken over” by *kanssa*, Nau only mentions the expression of comitativity, Accompaniment, ‘together with’, as the function of the *-ine* comitative. It happens to be just the same function that still is the prototypic function of both constructions.

Therefore, the second argument to consider in the quote from WALS (Stolz et al. 2005) is its central claim – that the inflectional comitative *-ine* should be giving way. Contrary to this claim, a comparison between the HS2000 corpus and the former descriptions of the usage of the case suggests that the field of application of the case might actually be broadening in the written language

rather than narrowing down: in newspaper texts the comitative case expresses a wider range of functions than those mentioned in Finnish reference grammars.

Most grammars, especially older ones (e.g. Kettunen & Vaula 1952: 71; Setälä 1966: 77; Karlsson 1982: 132; Sorjanen 1995: 60), mention only one function for *-ine*: Accompaniment. Ikola (2001: 36) emphasizes the significance of the obligatory possessive suffix because of which the comitative case always expresses some kind of possession or belonging. According to the latest descriptive Finnish grammar (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 581, 1211f.), *-ine* has a descriptive or an explanatory function in a sentence and is used to express a part-whole relationship, Accompaniment or Possession. The most diversified definition is given by Penttilä (1957: 436f.), according to whom the comitative case is mostly used to express Accompaniment, but in a proper context also Instrument, Means and Motive/Reason. However, the last three uses have been stated (Ikola 1999: 66) to exist only in dialects, not in the standard language.

In the newspaper corpus, however, the use of the comitative case is closest to Penttilä's description, although it seems even more comprehensive. Here are two examples of the extended functions found in the corpus sample that are not mentioned by the latest comprehensive descriptive grammar (Hakulinen et al. 2004). First, there is an instrumental use of *-ine* that mainly occurs with names of musical instruments and means of transport, as in (5).

- (5) *Nainen palasi auto-ine-en takaisin piha-an.*  
 woman returned car-COM-POSS.3 back yard-ILL  
 ‘The woman returned by car (lit. “with her car”) back to the yard.’

Second, there is a cause-effect reading, as illustrated in (6).

- (6) *Juopottelu rikoks-ine-en, terveystahinko-ine-en ja*  
 boozing crime-COM-POSS.3 health.damage-COM-POSS.3 and  
*sosiaaliongelm-ine-en kasvaa.*  
 social.problem-COM-POSS.3 increases  
 ‘Boozing and the crime(s), health damage(s) and social problem(s)  
 caused by it (lit. “with its crime(s), health damage(s) and social problem(s)”)  
 increase.’

Consequently, the use of the comitative case does not seem to be diminishing. The question still remains why, without any evidence to back up their claim, Stolz et al. (2005; 2006) have taken it for granted that the comitative is giving way to the *kanssa* construction.

The following explanation seems plausible. During the history of Indo-

European languages, case systems have been replaced by an assortment of adpositional constructions (cf. e.g. Blake 2001: 175ff.; Kulikov 2006: 33ff.), and those unfamiliar with other language families tend to ascribe some sort of natural necessity to this development. The Uralic language family offers interesting opposing data: the general tendency of the development has been, on the contrary, toward larger case systems (e.g. Abondolo 1998: 18; Comrie 1988: 463f.). The relationship between the Finnish comitative case and the *kanssa* construction does not fit into the picture commonly held about grammaticalization processes, in that a case suffix is not simply being replaced by an adposition (cf. e.g. Lehmann 1985), as Stolz et al. (2005; 2006) seem to assume. How the Finnish comitative and the *kanssa* construction relate to the central tenets of the grammaticalization theory is, however, a question I cannot delve into in this context.

It is understandable that in cross-linguistic studies such as those by Stolz et al. (2005; 2006; 2009), which draw on data from a huge variety of languages, it is not possible to examine in any depth all the details from every individual language, and I acknowledge that it was not their main task to give a detailed account of the Finnish facts. However, it seriously undermines the credibility of such studies if the data from individual languages are not correct. It is the responsibility of a research into individual languages such as the present study

to point out flaws in major data-driven cross-linguistic studies.

#### **4. Does the *kanssa* construction cover the functions of the comitative?**

The assumption of an ongoing process in which the inflectional comitative is being replaced by the *kanssa* construction includes a supposition about (a certain amount of) synonymy between these two constructions. This second claim, also found in the literature both implicitly and explicitly (e.g. Stolz et al. 2006), can be formulated as follows: “There is a considerable overlap in the functional domains of the comitative case *-ine* and the postposition *kanssa*.”

In order to replace the comitative, the postposition *kanssa* should be sufficiently synonymous with the case to be able to cover its functional domain. Therefore, the claim that the comitative is giving way to *kanssa* entails that the functions overlap considerably. This has also been explicitly claimed. For example Stolz et al. (2006: 61) state the following:

The postposition *kanssa*, which governs the genitive, competes with the morphological comitative and seems to be gaining the upper hand as it has been taking over many functions formerly fulfilled by the inflectional



case (Nau 1995: 133). The functional domains of the comitative suffix and the postposition overlap considerably without being absolutely identical. (Stolz et al. 2006: 61.)

Mentions about the functions of *-ine* and *kanssa* being (almost) the same also occur in Finnish literature on the topic. Karlsson (1982: 132) and Sorjanen (1995: 60) explain the meaning of the comitative case with a parallel to *kanssa*, whereas the basic dictionary of Finnish language (Haarala et al. 1990-1994: s.v. *kanssa*) does it the other way around: it uses *-ine* comitative for explaining a phrase with *kanssa*. The idea of replacement also occurs in the most recent Finnish descriptive grammar (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 942f., 1211f.).

It is clear that the two constructions have common functions. First, they share the prototypic function of Accompaniment, as has been seen above in the examples (1) and (2). Second, both of them are used for encoding Possession, as illustrated in the examples (7) and (8):

(7) *Taaperran varuste-ine-ni venee-n laidalle*

(...).

I.waddle equipment-COM-POSS.1 boat-GEN side-ALL

‘I waddle next to the side of the boat with my equipment.’

(8) [U]pseeri tuli luokse-ni asee-n kanssa (...).

officer came to-POSS.1 gun-GEN with

‘An officer came to me with a gun.’

Most importantly, however, the usage of the two constructions differs considerably. Their functional domains are dissimilar in the following proportions: in the corpus sample some 30 % of the comitative constructions could be replaced by *kanssa* constructions, whereas only some 15 % of the *kanssa* constructions could be replaced by comitative constructions, evaluated on the basis of the author’s intuition as a native speaker of Finnish (see also Sirola 2008). Therefore it is clearly misleading to claim that the meanings of the two constructions “overlap considerably”.

### **5. No overlap: three main differences in the use of *-ine* and *kanssa***

It is not uncommon across languages that there is a difference in the usage of a case and a (roughly) equivalent adposition. Often this is part of a grammaticalization process: the old case form encodes general meanings, while the adposition, being a more recent form in the language, encodes specific,

more restricted meanings (e.g. Kemmer 1993: 223ff.; Dahl 2000). The former is then used to express conventional relations and the latter, for instance, to emphasize the non-typical interpretation in the context (cf. Ojutkangas 2008; in this volume also Klavan et al., Kittilä & Ylikoski, Lestrade, and Zúñiga).

However, this general tendency is not suitable to describe the division of labour between the Finnish comitative case and the *kanssa* construction. This is shown already by the fact that both constructions are used to encode the general meaning of the case, Accompaniment; if the preceding was to apply to their relation, *kanssa* would be used primarily to encode more specific meanings. Instead, three main differences can be noted in their usage:

a. Expression of reciprocal action is common with the postposition *kanssa* (55 % of the *kanssa*-sentences in the corpus sample express reciprocal action), but impossible with the comitative case (0 %)

b. Co-occurrence with personal pronouns and proper names is common with *kanssa* (e.g. proper nouns 32 %), but nearly impossible with the comitative (e.g. proper nouns 0.5 %)

c. Expression of diverse kinds of meronymic and hyponymic relations is common with the comitative (50 %), but impossible with *kanssa* (0 %)

These differences are directly based on the meanings of the two constructions.

The postposition structure presents the relationship between two participants as being symmetrical, whereas the comitative encodes an asymmetrical relationship between two participants: as in comitative structures universally, the companion (which is encoded with *-ine*) is subordinate to the accompanee and hence participates in the situation described by the lexical verb only through its association with the accompanee, never independently. Therefore, it is impossible to encode, for instance, a reciprocal action with the comitative case, as the companion instantiates the same role as the accompanee. Consider the sentence (9).

(9) *Tuomioja ei kollego-ine-en aio käydä*  
 Tuomioja NEG colleague-COM-POSS.3intend attend  
*sissi-en kanssa suor-i-a neuvottelu-ja*  
 guerilla-PL.GEN with direct-PL-PART negotiation-PL.PART  
*Filippiini-en hallitukse-n ohi.*  
 Philippines-PL.GEN government-GEN past

‘Accompanied by his colleague(s), Tuomioja doesn’t intend to negotiate with the guerillas past the government of the Philippines.’

The *colleague(s)*, who is/are encoded with the comitative case, form(s) one side

of the negotiations together with *Tuomioja*. In order to express the opposing side of the negotiations, the *guerillas* – that is, the other argument of the verb – the *kanssa* construction is needed. This could not be expressed by the comitative case. The difference in symmetry between *-ine* and *kanssa* can be illustrated even more clearly with the following self-invented minimal pair:<sup>7</sup>

(10) *Caesar neuvotteli vihollis-te-nsa kanssa*

Caesar negotiated enemy-PL-GEN;POSS.3 with

‘Caesar negotiated with his enemies’

(11) \**Caesar neuvotteli vihollis-ine-en*

Caesar negotiated enemy-COM-POSS.3

‘Caesar negotiated accompanied by his enemies [with someone else]’

The postpositional phrase in (10) expresses the interlocutor, the opposite participant in the action, while the comitative case in (11) produces a rather absurd meaning by suggesting a sympathetic cooperation between the enemies.

Furthermore, the comitative case ending attached to a noun is necessarily followed by a possessive suffix that (in most cases) refers to the accompanee.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> I thank Esa Itkonen for this example (28.4.2009).

<sup>8</sup> The possessive suffix does not obligatorily refer to the accompanee, but the contrary is rare. In

This binds the participants to each other, while the participants of the *kanssa* structure do not have such a semantic restriction. This difference can be seen in the use of the constructions in two ways: (a) the *kanssa* construction can be used more widely than the comitative case for expressing Accompaniment; (b) the comitative case can express some extended functions that are impossible with *kanssa*. I will elaborate these points in the following.

Ad a): The fact that a possessive suffix is obligatorily attached to the case has one interesting and unexpected consequence. As one would expect, a high-animacy nominal is the normal and often the primary option with the comitative (Stolz et al. 2009: 603f.), as the case prototypically expresses Accompaniment of human participants. Across languages, individual cases seem to have preferences for nominals of a certain animacy type (Silverstein 1976; Aristar 1997) and the patterns of such preferences tend to follow the combination of features often called the animacy hierarchy (e.g. Croft 1990: 111ff.):

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> pronoun < 3<sup>rd</sup> pronoun < proper names < human common noun < nonhuman animate common noun < inanimate common noun

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the corpus sample there is only one such case:

<i>Suome-ssa</i>	<i>on</i>	<i>epätodennäköis-tä,</i>	<i>että</i>	<i>rahastoyhtiö-n</i>
Finland-INES	is	unlikely-PART	that	fund.company-GEN
<i>konna-t</i>	<i>livistävät</i>	<i>raho-ine-si</i>		<i>menemä-än.</i>
villain-PL	decamp	money-COM-POSS.2		going-ILL

‘In Finland it is unlikely that the villains of a fund company would decamp with your money.’

The comitative belongs naturally to the so called high-animacy cases that prefer the high-animacy nominals (cf. Aristar 1997: 318f.). However, the Finnish data do not completely correspond with this expectation: nominals from the high-animacy end of the hierarchy do not occur with the Finnish comitative case at all, or they are very rare, while the rest of the hierarchy is covered by the case. This could result (at least partly) from the special bond created by the possessive suffix.<sup>9</sup>

In Finnish, it is impossible to inflect the personal pronouns in the comitative and, hence, they are also absent from the corpus. The use of the comitative case on proper names is very rare (author's evaluation as a native speaker) – this is shown in the corpus sample, too, where there are only 10 sentences (0.5 %) in which a proper name is inflected in the comitative. Furthermore, these sentences express mainly the extended functions of the case (part-whole relationship and spatial relations), while only one, the example (12), can be interpreted as expressing Accompaniment.

(12) *Nightwish ja Sentenced vetosivat paika-lla*

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<sup>9</sup> In Estonian, which has lost the possessive suffixes, the comitative case covers all the nominals on the animacy hierarchy. However, lack of possessive suffixes does not suffice as an explanation. This is suggested by the fact that the other so called marginal cases in Finnish, the abessive and the instructive case which do not have an obligatory possessive suffix attached, are used defectively with the nominals of the high-animacy end of the hierarchy, as well.

Nightwish and Sentenced appealed spot-ADE  
*notkuv-iin hevare-i-hin, Jimi Pääkallo*  
wobbling-PL.ILL heavy.metal.lover-PL-ILL, Jimi Pääkallo  
*Tyrävyö-ine-en pikkutyttö-i-hin (...).*  
Tyrävyö-COM-POSS.3 little.girl-PL-ILL

‘[The bands called] Nightwish and Sentenced appealed to the heavy metal lovers hanging around on the spot, Jimi Pääkallo with (his) [band called] Tyrävyö [lit. Truss] to the little girls.’

This example illustrates well one possible reason why the comitative case is so rarely applied to proper names when expressing Accompaniment: the possessive suffix contributes a strong possessive extra meaning to Accompaniment. As a consequence, it requires a special kind of legal or social hierarchical arrangement between the participants to make the expression adequate. In the context of the example (12) it creates the interpretation that the musician Jimi Pääkallo has a leading position in the band Tyrävyö (or is the “proprietor” of the band).

The situation is even more delicate with persons’ names. Even though a sentence like *Matti tuli juhla-an Sirkku-ine-en* (Matti came party-ILL Sirkku-COM-POSS.3 ‘Matti came to the party with his Sirkku’) is imaginable, it is not a



neutral way of expression but valid only in a very specific context – that is, if Matti and Sirkku are a couple. Furthermore, it includes an implicit dismissive tone towards Sirkku, cf. the interpretation of legal or social arrangements between the participants in the example (12). This can be avoided, though, by using a nominal adjunct, such as *Matti tuli Sirkku-vaimo-ine-en* (Matti came Sirkku-wife-COM-POSS.3 ‘Matti came with his wife Sirkku’) – a strategy that is marginally found in the corpus, too. In the corpus sample, there are 12 sentences (0.2 %) in which a nominal adjunct has been used in this function. Nevertheless, the use of proper nouns in connection with the comitative case is extremely rare.

With regard to the postposition *kanssa*, there are virtually no semantic restrictions to the kinds of participants with which it can combine. In contrast to the comitative case, the *kanssa* construction covers the nominals of the whole animacy hierarchy. For example, it can readily combine with proper nouns: the head of the construction is a proper noun in 37 % of the sentences with the *kanssa* construction in the corpus sample; 92 % of these sentences express Accompaniment. In addition, *kanssa* is used commonly and in a neutral way with personal pronouns, too.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, *kanssa* remains the preferred

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<sup>10</sup> Even though it is the neutral option to combine personal pronouns with *kanssa*, the corpus sample contains only two hits, both of them *häne-n kanssa-an* (s/he-GEN with-POSS.3 ‘with him/her’). As newspaper texts form a quite non-intimate genre, the paucity of personal pronouns is not surprising, though. In the whole corpus there are 338 personal pronouns

means for expressing Accompaniment in connection with nominals of the high end of the animacy hierarchy while *-ine* is limited mainly to the human common nouns.

Ad b): The bond between the participants allows the comitative to express diverse kinds of meronymic and hyponymic relations. The most representative kind of example is perhaps the comitative case encoding the meronym (for example *a root*) in a meronymic relation ('a root is a part of a tree'), as in (13), but it is also used to express more loose relations. The exact meaning of the comitative often seems to be situationally constructed, as in (14), where the aggregate of *everyday life* consists of different components such as *worries* and *conflicts*. It depends on cultural and even situational factors of which components exactly the aggregate is seen to be composed.

(13) *Myrskyriuhdoi pu-i-ta juur-ine-en ylös*  
 storm pulled tree-PL-PART root-COM-POSS.3 up  
*maa-sta (...)*  
 ground-ELAT

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combined with *kanssa* (including its spoken variants *kans* and *kaa*): 14 cases of 'with me', 5 of 'with you (sg.)', 176 of 'with him/her', 11 of 'with us', 2 cases of 'with you (pl.)' and 130 of 'with them'. (It is worth bearing in mind that no single personal pronoun is inflected in the comitative in the whole corpus.) At least according to my intuition as a native speaker of Finnish, *kanssa* and its variants *kans* and *kaa* are very common with the personal pronouns as well as with proper names in less formal language forms.

‘The storm pulled trees with their roots up from the ground.’

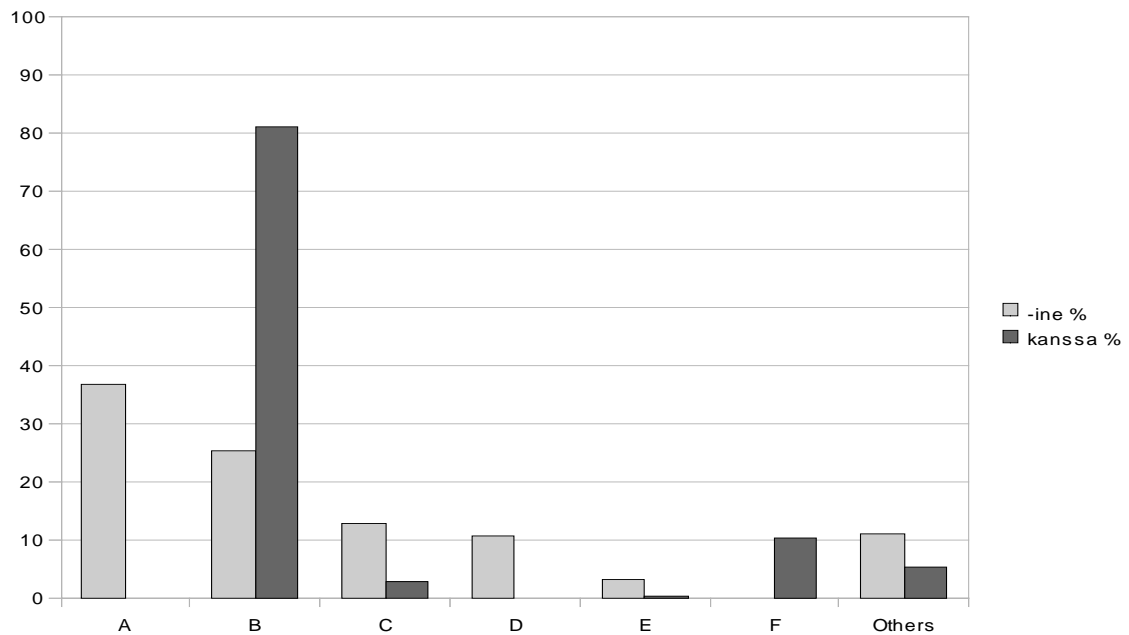
(14) *Toiminnanjohtaja-n*            *arki*            *huol-ine-en,*  
executive.director-GEN            everyday.life    worry-COM-POSS.3  
*ristiriito-ine-en*            *ja*            *byrokraatio-ine-en*            *on*  
conflict-COM-POSS.3    and    bureaucracy-COM-POSS.3            is  
*välttämätön*    *tukitoimi.*  
necessary            measure.of.support

‘An executive director’s everyday life with its worries, conflicts and  
bureaucracy is a necessary measure of support.’

## **6. The functional domains of the comitative and the *kanssa* construction differ substantially**

I have been arguing for a clear difference between the functional domains of the  
comitative case and the postposition *kanssa*. I have shown that there are  
important differences between the functions which the two constructions  
express. What is more, the distributions of their shared functions differ also.  
The main functions of the comitative case *-ine* and the postposition construction

*kanssa* are shown in Figure 1, based on the HS2000 corpus (*-ine*: n = 572 sentences, *kanssa*: n = 400 sentences; cf. Sirola 2008; Sirola-Belliard, in preparation). The distributions are presented in the order of the diminishing frequency of the use of the comitative case.



**Figure 1. The proportions (%) of the main functions of the comitative case *-ine* and the postposition *kanssa* in HS2000 corpus.**

The two constructions have three functions that can be expressed by one construction only but not by the other: two of these are expressed by the comitative case and one by *kanssa*. With respect to the comitative case, these are the extended functions based on the semantic bond between the participants: first (A), the expression of parts or components that are contained in a

particular whole (cf. the examples (13-14) above), and second (D), the expression of entities that are not inclusive but belong (often spatially) together and, together, form a (functional) whole, as in the example (15). With regard to the *kanssa* construction, this non-shared function (F) has to do with the expression of mutual relation between independent participants of which at least one is non-human, as in the example (16).

(15) *Odysseus piti tarkkaan huol-ta, että sali-n*  
 Odysseus took closely care-PART that hall-GEN  
*ainoa jousi nuol-ine-en oli häne-llä.*  
 only bow arrow-COM-POSS.3 was he-ADE

‘Odysseus made sure that in the hall he had the only bow with its arrow(s).’

(16) *Jokainen kirjoittaja painii ongelm-i-en*  
 every writer wrestles problem-PL-GEN  
*kanssa (...).*  
 with

‘Every writer wrestles with problems.’

The constructions also have three shared functions: (B) Accompaniment of two (or more) human beings, (C) Possession of a concrete or an abstract entity (for the definition of Possession used here cf. Heine 1997: 34f.), and, marginally, (E) Instrument. In the last category of the figure (Others), the two constructions are not comparable. With respect to the *kanssa* construction, the category mainly contains several semantically distinct groups too small to have quantitative significance, whereas in the case of the comitative its content is more diverse: there are some idiomatic expressions and one minor functional class (reason–effect-relation); furthermore, a major part of the Others-category for the comitative consists of sentences with a rather vague meaning of “belonging” which still need further analysing and defining.

Figure 1 shows clearly the differences in the use of the two constructions, both in the repertoire of the possible functions and in the frequencies of the shared functions. The function of Accompaniment serves as a good example of the differences in the distributions. Even though it is the prototypical function of both constructions, the frequencies are substantially different. Where more than four fifths of the postpositions *kanssa* express Accompaniment, only one fourth of the sentences with the comitative case are used to express it. This alone shows that *kanssa* is clearly focused on the prototypical function, whereas the comitative encodes a wider range of functions.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has challenged the putative synonymy of the Finnish inflectional comitative *-ine* and the construction with the postposition *kanssa*. More specifically, the following two claims found in recent literature have proven ill-founded: that (1) the comitative case is no longer productive and will be replaced by the postposition *kanssa*, and that (2) there is a considerable overlap in the functional domains of the case and the postposition.

A study of the newspaper corpus of *Helsingin Sanomat* shows five things. First, the comitative case seems to be freely applied to all nouns and adjectives and therefore can be considered a productive case. Second, the comitative is widely used beyond the functions mentioned in grammars, which suggests that its functional domain might rather be increasing than decreasing in the written language. Third, the case and the postposition are not generally replaceable with one another, as there are three main differences in their usage: expression of reciprocal action, co-occurrence with personal pronouns and proper names, and expression of meronymic and hyponymic relations. Fourth, both the comitative case and the postposition *kanssa* have some distinct functions that

are not expressed by the other construction. Fifth, the distributions of the constructions' shared functions differ from one another.

Consequently, the two constructions cannot be considered synonymous. It is not justified to claim that the comitative *-ine* belongs to yesteryear and is in the process of being replaced by the postposition *kanssa*. Both constructions have their own, separate functional domains in the Finnish language. What should be researched further, however, is the diachrony of the functions of the two constructions: have they changed over time or have they always formed separate functional domains as they do now? Further research might also affirm the impression evoked by the corpus that the functional domain of the comitative case is indeed increasing.



### *Abbreviations*

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
ADE	adessive
ADP	adposition
ALL	allative
COM	comitative
ELAT	elative
GEN	genitive
ILL	illative
INES	inessive
N	noun
NEG	negation
PART	partitive
PL	plural
POSS	possessive suffix
POST	postposition

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