

# The Undergoer in Passive Clauses in Estonian and Finnish

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## Abstract

The passive in Estonian and Finnish differs from Indo-European, and the nomenclature in the literature varies considerably. The passive is divided into two groups – impersonal and personal. In the impersonal group the present and past tenses consist of an inflected form, while the compound tenses are formed with the verb *olema* ‘to be’ and the passive past participle. These compound forms are often isomorphic with the personal passive. For the present analysis the data has been divided into two broad groups – the simple impersonal tenses on the one hand and the compound forms with *olema*, both impersonal and personal grouped together. In active clauses the object case alternates between partitive and accusative case, the latter being used when the event is bounded. Such an alternation also occurs in the case of the undergoer in impersonal clauses, but in the personal passive the undergoer is always nominative. The undergoer of impersonal forms is an object, while that of the personal passive is a subject.

The case used for the undergoer in passive clauses has been studied, comparing Finnish and Estonian. Both diachronic and synchronic studies have been carried out, using the Bible and some other texts. In Estonian simple impersonal clauses, the partitive case was predominant (51-70%) in Bible texts, both historically and in recent times, but in the other early texts there were very few partitives. In Finnish the partitive was infrequent (15-16%) in the early Bibles, compared to 54.5% in 1995. Among the compound forms in old Estonian there were hardly any examples of partitive undergoers, while in old Finnish there were 6-9%, increasing in recent texts. In Finnish compound forms there was a preponderance of impersonals, while in Estonian the personal passive was predominant.

## Keywords

Undergoer Passive Impersonal Diachronic Estonian Finnish

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to look at the use of the partitive case for the undergoer in passive clauses, and its alternation with the nominative and accusative, both synchronically and diachronically, using mainly Bible texts, but also other literature.

The questions considered are firstly whether the incidence of partitive among undergoers of passive verbs is similar to that among objects of active verbs, secondly whether there has been any change over time, and thirdly, whether there are differences between Estonian and Finnish.

## 2. Terminology

It is first necessary to discuss terminology. The term ‘undergoer’ has been used for the logical object towards which the action is directed, as this term covers all such instances, whether grammatically objects or subjects. There are a number of different opinions concerning the nomenclature of those constructions, which are often referred to as ‘passive’ in Estonian and Finnish, and the two languages differ in that respect, although the constructions are cognate. Vihman (2002: 2) has a good classification of the various forms in Estonian and Table 1 is based on her paper. However, the term ‘personal passive’ instead of mere ‘passive’ has been used in the interest of clarity for the present study. The affirmative Estonian forms are shown, with the Finnish in brackets.

	Impersonal (Indefinite)	Personal Passive
Present	<i>tehakse (tehdään)</i>	<i>on tehtud (on tehty)</i>
Past	<i>tehti (tehtiin)</i>	<i>oli tehtud (oli tehty)</i>
Perfect	<i>on tehtud (on tehty)</i>	<i>on olnud tehtud (on ollut tehty)</i>
Pluperfect	<i>oli tehtud (oli tehty)</i>	<i>oli olnud tehtud (oli ollut tehty)</i>

**Table 1. Impersonal and passive paradigms of the verb ‘do’ in Estonian (Finnish in brackets).**

### 2.1. Impersonal Forms

In the left hand column the impersonal forms are shown in various tenses. Estonian grammarians use the term ‘impersonal’ (Mihkla et al. 1974: 85; Rajandi 1999: 106), while in Finnish some prefer the term ‘indefinite’ (Kangasmaa-Minn 1979; Shore 1988). Many linguists believe that the word ‘passive’ should not be used at all in Balto-Finnic. Kangasmaa-Minn (1979: 99) argues that if initial Finnish grammars had not been based on Latin, the word ‘passive’ would never have surfaced. Nevertheless, the word ‘passive’ does appear in a number of grammars (e.g. Karlsson 1999: 172). The agent is understood to be human and usually plural, so the explicit expression of an agent by other means, such as a postpositional phrase or semantic case is limited in the modern languages. The compound tenses are constructed with the auxiliary *olema*

'to be' (*olla* in Finnish) or *saama* 'to get, become' and the passive past participle. The auxiliary here is in the impersonal 3<sup>rd</sup> person form.

## 2.2. Personal Passive

The right hand column of Table 1 shows what is called the 'personal passive' by some Estonian linguists (e.g. Mihkla et al. 1974: 87) and passive adjectivization or stative passive by others (e.g. Erelt et al. 1993: 30). This consists also of the verbs *olema* or *saama* and the passive past participle. Finnish has a similar construction, but it is regarded as a copula clause, with the passive past participle used predicatively. The passive past participle can be used attributively, like an adjective, but even then it has verbal features. It can have an agent, e.g. *minu tehtud töö* 'work done by me' (lit. 'my done work'). The participle can also be modified by adverbs which typically modify verbs, e.g. well, rapidly etc. The personal passive indicates the resultant state of an action, while the impersonal relates to the action itself. There is no implied agent in this construction as there is for impersonals, and the expression of an agent by a genitive noun or a postpositional phrase is grammatical. Shore (1988), writing about Finnish passive, does not consider the personal passive at all and refers to the passive past participle as an 'indefinite participle'. Kangasmaa-Minn (1979: 106) concludes that there is no personal passive construction in Finnish. Karlsson (1999) in his Finnish grammar does not discuss this construction under the heading passive, but in the section on participles he lists the passive past participle (p.200), and gives a number of examples.

Although in each language the compound tenses of the impersonal paradigm and the personal passive appear very similar, there are differences. Only transitive verbs can form the personal passive, while both transitive and intransitive verbs can occur in the impersonal form. In the personal passive the auxiliary agrees with the undergoer in person and number, but in the impersonal it remains in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular form. However, with a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular undergoer it is difficult to differentiate between the two. In Estonian the verb 'to be' has the same form for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural in the present tense, in Finnish the plural differs. In Finnish the passive past participle agrees in number with the undergoer in the personal passive, but remains invariable in the impersonal paradigm. In Estonian it is invariable also in the personal passive. Sometimes it is possible to differentiate semantically between the dynamic impersonal and the static personal passive, but that is a subjective decision. Word order can help in that the impersonal clause more often begins with the verb. The case of the undergoer is also of major importance, as discussed in the next section.

## 3. The Undergoer

In active clauses the case of the object of a transitive verb alternates between accusative for bounded situations affecting the entire undergoer in affirmative clauses, and the partitive elsewhere. In negative clauses the object is partitive. The accusative surfaces as the genitive for singular nouns and nominative for plural nouns, and in Finnish there is a special accusative form in the personal pronoun paradigm. In imperative and some non-finite clauses the singular object is nominative instead of genitive. A similar alternation occurs in the case of the undergoer in the impersonal clause, except that the genitive is not used, the accusative being represented by the nominative or the Finnish accusative personal pronouns. The partitive is always used

in negative clauses and for unbounded situations. This is shown for Estonian in examples (1) and (2).

- (1) (E) *Tehakse tööd*  
do-IMPERS work-PART-SG  
'People are working; work is being done'

- (2) (E) *Töö tehakse ära*  
work-NOM-SG do-IMPERS BOUNDING PARTICLE  
'The work will be done (completed).'

The use of the present tense can indicate completion in the future. Example (3) shows a partitive undergoer in an impersonal compound tense clause.

- (3) (E) *On tehtud tööd*  
AUX-3SG do-PASS-PAST-PTCL(PPP) work-PART-SG  
'People have been working; (some) work has been done'

The word order is flexible, and the noun can come first or after the auxiliary. Example (4) could be either impersonal or personal, depending on whether the focus is on the action or its result, while example (5) with the agreement between the auxiliary and the plural undergoer must be personal.

- (4) (E) *Töö on/oli tehtud*  
work-NOM-SG AUX-3SG-PRES/PAST do-PPP  
'The work has/had been done'

- (5) (E) *Asjad on/olid tehtud*  
thing-NOM-PL AUX-3PL-PRES/PAST do-PPP  
'The things are/were (in the state of having been) done'.

It is not possible to have a partitive undergoer in the personal passive paradigm (Rajandi 1999: 64), so all clauses with a partitive undergoer must be impersonal. All negative impersonal clauses must have a partitive undergoer. In negative clauses a nominative undergoer can only occur in the personal passive. It is difficult to find sentences in Estonian showing lack of agreement between a nominative undergoer and verb, which would indicate that the sentence is impersonal. Mihkla et al. (1974: 86) quotes an example:

- (6) (E) *Oli raiutud maha isegi metsa hiiglased*  
AUX-3SG-PAST fell-PPP down even forest-GEN-SG giant-NOM-PL  
'Even the giants of the forest had been felled' (my gloss)

Such lack of agreement is rather questionable in Estonian and if the nominative undergoer were in the initial position next to the auxiliary, the lack of agreement would seem grammatically wrong to most Estonians. It has been suggested that editors would correct any lack of agreement, and thus change an impersonal to personal passive (Rajandi 1999: 73). In Finnish lack of agreement in this situation is more common and acceptable (Kangasmaa-Minn 1979: 99).

To summarize, in the impersonal paradigm the undergoer has the features of an object: case alternation, the obligatory use of the partitive in negative clauses, the use of the accusative case rather than nominative for Finnish personal pronouns, and the

lack of agreement between verb and undergoer. In the personal passive the undergoer has the features of a subject: invariable nominative case, even in negative clauses, and agreement of the verb in person and number with the undergoer. The personal passive is the form which most closely resembles the Indo-European passive.

#### 4. Materials and Methods

St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians in the Bible was studied in Estonian and Finnish both synchronically and diachronically. Some other literature was also examined. The texts are listed on p.12. All impersonal and personal passive constructions with an undergoer were considered. The case of the undergoer was noted in each instance. For the purposes of this paper, while realizing the differences in terminology, I will refer to all the data as passive, and use the terms 'impersonal' and 'personal passive' for both Estonian and Finnish. The data are divided into two groups: simple impersonal, comprising the present and past tense of the impersonal, and compound forms. The latter includes all forms constructed with the auxiliaries *olema (olla)* or *saama*, as it is impossible in many instances to decide whether a construction is impersonal perfect tense or personal passive, although some attempt has been made to do so.

#### 5. The Undergoer in Simple Impersonal Constructions in Modern Estonian (1989) and Finnish (1995) Bible Texts

The proportion of undergoers in the various cases in the simple impersonal paradigm are listed for the modern languages in Table 2. Affirmative and negative clauses are considered separately. There were no instances of nominative or accusative undergoers in negative clauses. The term 'accusative' here refers only to the special accusative morphology of the personal pronouns in Finnish, not to the comprehensive term applied to all non-partitive objects.

	Total	Partitive Negative	Partitive Affirmative	Nominative Affirmative	Accusative Affirmative
Estonian	46	4 (8.7%)	25 (54.3%)	17 (37.0%)	-
Finnish	33	8 (24.2%)	10 (30.3%)	11 (33.3%)	4 (12.1%)

**Table 2. The undergoer in the simple impersonal in Estonian and Finnish**

Looking first at Estonian, in the 1989 translation of the New Testament, the undergoer is in the partitive case in the simple impersonal in 63% of instances. Considering only affirmative clauses, the proportion of partitive undergoers is 60%, which compares with 71.6% in the active voice (Lees 2004). In the Finnish 1995 edition of the Bible the total incidence of partitive undergoers in the simple impersonal is 54.5%. In affirmative clauses the proportion of partitives is 40.0% (46.7% in the active voice). In Finnish the accusative personal pronouns constitute 12.1% of the total undergoers. All undergoers in negative clauses are in the partitive case in both languages. The proportion of partitives is lower in Finnish than in Estonian in both active and

impersonal, with the proportions being slightly lower for the impersonal than the active in both languages. In both modern languages the undergoer in the simple impersonal construction has the characteristics of an object.

## 6. Studies of Simple Impersonals in Older Texts

Table 3 lists the results for the Bible and other texts in Estonian.

<b>Bible Texts</b>	Partitive	Nominative	Total
Southern NT 1686	19 (51.4%)	18 (48.6%)	37
NT 1715	19 (52.8%)	17 (47.2%)	36
Bible 1739	30 (69.8%)	13 (30.2%)	43
Bible 1914	25 (61.0%)	16 (39.0%)	41
Bible 1968	32 (62.7%)	19 (37.3%)	51
Bible 1989	22 (64.7%)	12 (35.3%)	34
NT 1989	29 (63.0%)	17 (37.0%)	46
<b>Other Texts</b>			
W-Koell 1535	0	2 (100%)	2
Müller 1600-1606	0	0	0
Stahl 1632-1641	1 (5.6%)	17 (94.4%)	18
Willmann 1782	6 (60.0%)	4(40.0%)	10
Jutlusse R 1791	12 (48.0%)	13 (52.0%)	25
Masing 1818	49 (72.1%)	19 (27.9%)	68
Kivi(Tuglas) 1924	19 (61.3%)	12 (38.7%)	31

**Table 3. Diachronic study of the undergoer in Estonian impersonals**

### 6.1. Older Bible Texts in Estonian

The earliest Bible texts are shown in the upper section of Table 3 with more recent editions for comparison. The New Testament in the southern Estonian dialect, published in 1686, had 51.4% of partitive undergoers. This differs from the proportion of partitive objects in active clauses, where the partitive was used in 89.5% of instances (Lees 2005) and where the unambiguous genitive form (used for singular noun objects in bounded situations) was only seen in two instances out of a total of 329 objects. However, the partitive and genitive case were syncretic in 44 instances, such forms being excluded from the calculations. Hence the figure of 89.5% may in fact be considerably lower. Ambiguity between nominative and partitive case, as in the present study, is much less common. Personal pronouns were mostly partitive in the impersonal clauses, as in the active clauses, but there were two 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns in the nominative case, including one in a negative clause. The New

Testament in the northern Estonian dialect from 1715 also had fairly equal numbers of partitive (52.8%) and nominative undergoers (47.2%) in the simple impersonal group. In the 1739 Bible the proportion of partitives had increased to 69.8%. The reason for this was partly the use of more impersonal constructions in the 1739 Bible, where the 1715 New Testament had active verb forms, as well as the use of partitive in 1739 where the 1715 text had the nominative case. The translators were Estonian-born clerics, educated in Latin and German, with some overlap between the groups involved in compiling the two editions. The later text was based on the 1715 translation, but with some grammatical changes. In subsequent editions the percentage of partitives remained between 60-65%, always somewhat lower than in active clauses.

## **6.2. Studies of Simple Impersonal in Other Old Estonian Literature**

The authors of the oldest texts were mostly of German extraction, although born in Estonia. There is some doubt about whether Müller was German or Estonian. There is no information about the author(s) of “*Jutlusse Ramat*” (Book of Sermons). All received their education in German, and most went to Germany for their tertiary studies. Their knowledge of Estonian varied considerably and in addition there were differences in dialects. At the time there was no standard Estonian language, which developed from the northern Estonian dialect used in the translation of the 1739 Bible. Most of the texts were of a religious nature. The catechisms were translations from German. The books by Stahl, which were analyzed, had a parallel text in German, which was probably primary and translated into Estonian. Willmann’s fables were translated from German. Hence, it was unavoidable that there was a strong German influence on early written Estonian.

Masing was an Estonian clergyman, who was considered the best Estonian linguist of his day. The portion of his work analyzed here was of a different genre, consisting of anecdotes and descriptions of other countries. The subject matter was undoubtedly obtained from a foreign source, presumably German, but it is not a straight translation.

In the analysis of older Estonian literature, shown in the lower section of Table 3, the simple impersonal was infrequent and undergoers were mostly in the nominative case. In addition to the fragmented catechism of Wanradt-Koell, shown in the table, there is only a small amount of other material available from the 16<sup>th</sup> century in which there were only two examples of the simple impersonal, both affirmative and the undergoers nominative.

The book of sermons by Müller from 1600-1606 had no examples of simple impersonals in the first 50 pages, but Ikola (1950: 60) quotes three past tense forms from this book, without mentioning any undergoers. Combining material from two books by Stahl (a total of 115 pages of catechism and sermons from 1632-1641), there was only one example of a partitive undergoer in 18 simple impersonal clauses. There was one nominative undergoer in a negative clause. However, in the writings of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, objects, especially plural ones, of active transitive verbs were sometimes in the nominative case in negative clauses, where in the modern language they would be partitive. Hence the criterion of always having a partitive undergoer in a negative clause is not valid as a test for objecthood in early 17<sup>th</sup> century Estonian.

The book of fables by Willmann, published in 1782, shows marked German influence, and in 100 pages there were only ten simple passive verbs. However, of these, six had a partitive undergoer. The paucity of examples makes this finding difficult to evaluate. “*Jutlusse Ramat*” from 1791 is similar in its language to the 1739 Bible, although the proportion of partitive undergoers is somewhat lower. Later texts have a preponderance of partitive undergoers, although always slightly less than in active clauses. Tuglas’ Estonian translation of Kivi’s novel appeared 54 years after the original, so his use of language generally conforms to modern standards. It follows Kivi’s text fairly closely, and some influence of Finnish cannot be excluded, although it is not obvious from reading the text.

### 6.3. The Undergoer in the Simple Impersonal in Old Finnish

The results for the undergoer in simple impersonal clauses in old Finnish are shown in Table 4.

<b>Bible Texts</b>	Partitive	Nominative	Accusative	Total
NT 1548	7 (14.9%)	40 (85.1%)	0	47
Bible 1642	8 (16.0%)	42 (84.0%)	0	50
Bible 1880	7 (12.7%)	48 (87.3%)	0	55
Bible 1995	18 (54.5%)	11 (33.3%)	4 (12.1%)	33
<b>Other Text</b>				
Kivi 1870	16 (44.4%)	20 (55.6%)	0	36

**Table 4. Diachronic study of the undergoer in Finnish simple impersonals**

The Finnish New Testament of 1548, translated by Agricola, had only 12.8% of partitive undergoers in simple impersonal clauses, and the subsequent Bible from 1642 was similar, with 16% partitive forms. The situation here is complicated by the fact that the singular nominative and the partitive were not always distinguished in the Finnish of that time. Only those forms which appear indubitably partitive have been counted as such, everything else being called nominative. The finding of a similar low incidence of partitives in the 1880 Bible, where these cases are clearly distinguished, supports this decision.

There were some features apart from the low incidence of partitive undergoers, which would suggest that in old Finnish the undergoer, even in the simple forms, was behaving more like a subject. There was agreement in person and number with the nominative undergoer in a few instances, e.g. (7a):

(7a) (F) ...*waan caiki me mwte-ta-ma* (1548, 15-51)<sup>1</sup>  
 but all-NOM 1PL-NOM change-PASS-1PL-PRES

<sup>1</sup> The numbers refer to Bible edition and chapter and verse of First Corinthians.



(7b) (F) ...*waan caiki me ... muutetan* (1642, 15-51)

1PL-NOM

IMPERS-PRES

‘but we will all be changed’

In (7a) the passive morpheme *-ta* is followed by the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural present tense suffix, which in old Finnish was *-ma*. Kangasmaa-Minn (1979: 99) gives a few more examples from Agricola. Similar personal suffixes have also been described in some of the dialects of southern Estonia (Keem 1998: 330; Wiedemann 1875: 475). Such forms have also been referred to as personal passive in Estonian and Finnish, but obviously differ from the present day compound forms. Apart from these rare forms, there was other evidence that the undergoer was more like a subject than object. Nominative case instead of partitive was found in some negative clauses. There were some instances of the 1<sup>st</sup> personal pronoun in the nominative case as undergoer (7a and b), which did not occur in the case of the object of active verbs. There were no accusative personal pronoun forms, even though they did occasionally occur in Agricola’s writings as direct objects of active verbs.

In the 1642 Finnish Bible there was no longer any agreement of the passive verb with the undergoer (7b), the verb being morphologically similar to the present day impersonal. There were no instances of nominative case in negative clauses. Hence the undergoer was becoming more like an object, although 1<sup>st</sup> person pronouns were still nominative and partitive forms were still far fewer than in active clauses. The results for the 1880 Bible were very similar.

The first Finnish novel, written by Aleksis Kivi, published in 1870, differs from the Bible of 1880 in having more partitive undergoers (44.4%). Although a few examples of the accusative personal pronouns were found as objects of active transitive verbs, there were none in passive clauses in the first three chapters. This novel consists largely of dialogue, so it would be much closer to the spoken language of the time than the Bible edition, which was essentially conservative, the changes being mainly in orthography and some archaic grammatical constructions. The difference between these contemporaneously published texts is largely due to the difference in genre, as well as the fact that Kivi’s language is the Finnish of his time, while the 1880 Bible is not significantly different in the features studied from that published in 1642.

## 7. Compound Forms

### 7.1. Modern Estonian and Finnish Bible texts

The results for the compound forms, impersonal and personal combined, are shown in Table 5 for modern Estonian (1989) and Finnish (1995). In affirmative clauses partitive undergoers in both languages are much less common than in the simple impersonal. In Finnish all negative clauses have partitive undergoers, while in Estonian there are equal numbers of nominative and partitive ones. Finnish also has a number of accusative personal pronoun undergoers.

	Total	Partitive Negative	Partitive Affirm.	Nominative Affirmative	Accusative Affirmative	Nominative Negative
Estonian	53	5 (9.4%)	1 (1.9%)	42 (79.2%)	-	5 (9.4%)
Finnish	38	8 (21.1%)	2 (5.3%)	23 (60.5%)	5 (13.2%)	0

**Table 5. The undergoer in compound passive in modern Estonian and Finnish**

In the Estonian data, of the 53 instances of compound forms, the six with partitive undergoers must be impersonal, the five negative clauses with nominative undergoers must be personal passive and so are the twelve clauses where the verb ‘to be’ agrees in person and number with the undergoer, all 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns, giving a total of 17 which are personal passive. Thirty clauses remain unclassifiable.

In the modern Finnish data, of 38 compound forms, 16 are obviously impersonal (ten partitive and five accusative undergoers and one instance of a plural undergoer with a singular verb). A further three can be considered impersonal, because each is conjoined with a contrasting negative clause, the undergoer in the negative being partitive. So, altogether out of the total of 38, 19 could be classified as impersonal. No negative clauses had a nominative undergoer. There was one affirmative clause with a nominative personal pronoun undergoer. That was the only clause that could definitely be identified as personal, leaving 18 that could not be classified.

From these results, despite the considerable number of unclassifiable tokens, it appears that in Estonian the prevailing type of clause with the verb ‘to be’ and the passive past participle is a personal passive, while in Finnish it is impersonal.

## 7.2. Old Estonian

The results for compound forms in old Estonian texts, together with some later ones for comparison, are shown in Table 6. It can be seen by comparing Tables 3 and 6 that in the oldest texts there were more examples of compound forms than simple impersonals, the difference being relatively slight in the Bible texts, but quite striking in the case of non-biblical texts before the 18<sup>th</sup> century as well as for Willmann, whose writing in 1782 was similar to that of writers in the preceding century. Partitive undergoers were relatively few. Many of the instances involved the verb *saama* ‘to get, become’, which was a translation from the German passive with *werden*. Most of these clauses fit into the personal passive, although many are unclassifiable. For most of the texts in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century the number of compound forms was similar to or less than the number of simple forms. At the same time the proportion of partitive undergoers was increasing, although remaining lower than in the case of the simple impersonal. These changes indicate diminishing German influence.

<b>Bible Texts</b>	Partitive	Nominative	Total
Southern NT 1686	0	49 (100%)	49
NT 1715	1 (1.5%)	64 (98.5%)	65
Bible 1739	0	69 (100%)	69
Bible 1914	6 (9.1%)	60 (90.9%)	66
Bible 1968	2 (4.2%)	46 (95.8%)	48
Bible 1989	0	57 (100%)	57
NT 1989	6 (11.3%)	47 (88.7%)	53
<b>Other Texts</b>			
W-Koell 1535	0	4 (100%)	4
Mueller 1600-1606	0	120 (100%)	120
Stahl 1632-1641	8 (5.8%)	129 (94.2%)	137
Willmann 1782	5 (5.0%)	95 (95.0%)	100
Jutlusse R 1791	3 (12.5%)	21 (87.5%)	24
Masing 1818	4 (12.5%)	28 (87.5%)	32
Kivi (Tuglas) 1924	7 (26.9%)	19 (73.1%)	26

**Table 6. Diachronic study of the undergoer in Estonian compound forms**

### 7.3. Old Finnish

The results for old Finnish compound forms are shown in Table 7. Partitive undergoers in old Finnish compound forms were few in number, although slightly more frequent than in old Estonian.

<b>Bible Texts</b>	Partitive	Nominative	Accusative	Total
NT 1548	4 (6.2%)	61 (93.8%)	0	65
Bible 1642	6 (9.0%)	61 (91.0%)	0	67
Bible 1880	3 (4.5%)	64 (95.5%)	0	67
Bible 1995	10 (26.3%)	23 (60.5%)	5 (13.2%)	38
<b>Other Text</b>				
Kivi 1870	3 (13.6%)	19 (86.4%)	0	22

**Table 7. Diachronic study of the undergoer in Finnish compound forms**

The accusative forms of the personal pronouns did not appear in the older texts. Separating out the group of compound forms in Agricola's New Testament of 1548, there were three with partitive undergoers, which thus fall into the impersonal group. On the other hand there were 35 which clearly fit the pattern of personal passive (six negative clauses with a nominative undergoer and 29 with agreement between undergoer and verb in person and number). There is a change from predominance of the personal passive in 1548 to impersonal in 1995.

## **8. Summary and Conclusions**

The constructions in Balto-Finnic which are often considered together under the heading 'passive' are divided into the impersonal and personal passive. Partitive undergoers are found only in the impersonal and in the simple tenses are slightly less frequent than in active clauses. Impersonal clauses in Finnish have slightly fewer partitives than in Estonian, corresponding to results in the active voice. The compound tenses of the impersonal and the whole personal passive paradigm are similar, consisting of the verb 'to be' and the passive past participle, and often cannot be distinguished from each other. Partitive undergoers are much less frequent among the compound forms, as they only occur in the impersonal group. In modern Finnish the compound forms are more often impersonal than personal, while in Estonian the personal passive appears to dominate. The undergoer in the simple and compound tenses of the impersonal paradigm has the features of an object, while the undergoer of the personal passive is a subject.

In the Estonian texts in the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century simple impersonal forms were very infrequent, but the fact that they appear at all shows that they must have been present in the spoken language. Early Finnish material has not been analyzed to the same extent as Estonian, but in Agricola's translation of the New Testament in 1548 simple impersonal forms are quite frequent, indicating that they were probably common in the spoken language. A few examples from Agricola and some data from Estonian dialects suggest that the impersonal paradigm may originally have been personal. The undergoer in early texts in both languages appears more like a subject than an object. The development of object features has been noted over time.

Among old Finnish and Estonian compound forms there was a predominance of personal passive, which in modern Finnish has become a copula clause with the passive past participle as an adjectival predicate. In Estonian it has remained as a passive, but it now has a more stative connotation, indicating the state reached by means of an action. Hence there have arisen terms such as 'passive adjectivization', 'stative passive' and 'resultative passive'. Many of the examples of personal passive in old Estonian would nowadays be expressed by the impersonal. The personal passive of Estonian resembles the Indo-European passive and German influence is apparent in view of its preponderance in the earliest Estonian texts. It is impossible to know how prevalent the personal passive was among the native population, but the passive past participle obviously existed. The fact that Finnish was not subjected to similar German influence may well account for the differences in the earliest texts in the two languages.

## Texts Analyzed

### *Estonian*

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