

INSUBORDINATE RELATIVE CLAUSES IN FINNISH – OLD AND NEW

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Abstract. This article concerns insubordination, that is, the use of clause types which are ordinarily considered subordinate but occur without main clauses. We study the use of insubordinate relative clauses (RCs) in Finnish with data from two corpora, the Arkisyn corpus of contemporary conversation and the Agricola corpus from the 16th century. Our main findings are that the construction is put to very similar uses in the two corpora, but that it is more common in the newer corpus. We show that insubordination of RCs existed along with subordination already in the earliest records of Finnish language use. Thus, insubordination of RCs is not a more recent development than their use as subordinate clauses. We conclude that the more frequent use in the newer data is likely not a result of a process of grammaticalization that would have occurred since the 16th century.

Keywords: relative clause, subordination, insubordination, free NP, grammaticalization, clause combination, main clause

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1. Introduction

Our study concerns the use of insubordinate relative clauses in two different corpora, one consisting of video- and audio-recorded contemporary Finnish conversations and the other made up of Mikael Agricola's New Testament translations from the 16th century. Insubordination is a term first developed by Evans (2007: 367) to refer to “the conventionalized main clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses”, that is, clauses that are subordinate in form but lack main clauses (see also Ohori 1995 on Japanese ‘suspended clauses’). In the Finnish grammatical literature,

the use of insubordination has been previously discussed in connection with complement clauses (Laury & Seppänen 2008; Koivisto, Laury & Seppänen 2011) and conditional clauses (Kauppinen 1998; Laury 2012; Lindström, Laury & Lindholm 2019). Evans (2007: 414–415) provides examples of insubordinate relative clauses (henceforth, RCs) from languages of Australia. Horie (2018) discusses the use of insubordinate RCs with nominal heads in Japanese, where they are called *meishi teji bun* ‘noun presentational sentences’ which serve as a kind of “headline” or may describe and explain a scene being witnessed as it unfolds (2018: 710–711). An example cited by Horie is the following:

- (1) (Horie 2018: 711)
Renko basu ni tobinoru. [simaru] doa
 Renko bus to jump.and.ride close door
 ‘Renko jumps onto the bus. The door which closes.’¹

In his seminal work, Evans used the term in two different ways, diachronically to describe the stepwise development of insubordination through ellipsis from formerly subordinate clauses, resulting in eventual conventionalization of such use, as well as synchronically, as “the independent use of constructions exhibiting the characteristics of subordinate clauses” (Evans & Watanabe 2016: 2). Evans suggests that the insubordinate use of RCs, consisting only of an NP head and an RC, may have evolved from cleft constructions; such constructions are suggested to have a presentational use, or serve as ‘focus constructions’ and thus involve a “marked informational status” (2007: 414–415). Thus, an insubordinate RC such as ‘the man who went’ would have developed from ‘it was the man who went’. We examine our data to see if there is any evidence of the kind of diachronic development described by Evans (2007).

In this article, we focus on RCs which do not have a main clause, but instead, are attached to a free NP functioning as the head of the relative clause (see Laury & Helasvuo 2015, where these constructions are called DNP+RC, where DNP stands for Detached Noun Phrase). Detached or free NPs are noun phrases which are not part of any clause,

1 Japanese is a verb-final language, as can be seen in the first sentence, and RCs are placed before the head, so the verb *simaru* is here an RC. Italics and bolding added by us for consistency with our other examples.

but rather, form units of their own (Helasvuo 2001, 2019). They have also been called ‘unattached’ NPs (Ono & Thompson 1994; Tao 1996) or ‘detachments’ (Barnes 1985; Lagae 2007).

After discussing our data in section 2, we first describe how RCs that are not subordinate to any other clause were used in each of our corpora, starting with the contemporary data (section 3.1) and then with a discussion of the older data (section 3.2). We do this to determine whether insubordination of RCs is a phenomenon found only or at least predominantly in informal conversation and perhaps a novel feature grammaticized from earlier fully subordinate constructions, or whether it is a feature of the Finnish language which has existed for a long time. In section 3.3 we discuss our findings, and section 4 contains our conclusions.

2. Data

Our data come from two sources, the Arkisyn corpus and the Agricola corpus. Both corpora have been developed at the Department of Finnish and Finno-Ugric Languages at the University of Turku. The corpora have been morphosyntactically annotated to facilitate detailed searches. They are available at the Language Bank of Finland.

The Arkisyn corpus is a corpus of contemporary Finnish conversations. The corpus currently contains 278,910 words. It is based on audio- and video-recorded conversations and their transcripts. The data come from the Conversation Analysis archive at the University of Helsinki and the Archive of Finnish and Finno-Ugric Languages at the University of Turku. We have extracted all RCs from the corpus (N = 956). We focus here on RCs with free NP heads (N = 193).

The Agricola corpus contains all known works by Mikael Agricola from the 16th century (428,314 words). These are among the first known Finnish-language texts. For the current study, we have extracted RCs from the Gospels from Agricola’s translation of the New Testament (published in 1548). Our subcorpus of RCs with free NP heads contains 107 such RCs out of the total of 1,771 RCs in the Gospels.

Table 1 shows the frequencies of the Finnish relativizers in the two datasets. Table 1 gives the different lemmas; the written forms or the spoken versions may vary in the actual data. The table shows that the datasets share a common set of relativizers: *mikä*, *joka*, *kun/kuin*, and

kuka/ken. *Joka* can be used for human and non-human referents, while *mikä* is mostly used for non-human referents. *Kun/kuin* do not have clear preferences concerning the semantic class of the head, whereas *kuka* is mainly used for human referents (for more discussion, see Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma 2022). In the data, the relativizers may appear in various forms; we use the lemma forms when we discuss the relativizers in the text, except for direct quotations from an example. The relative frequencies of the relativizers, however, differ in the two datasets. In the contemporary data, *mikä* is by far the most common relativizer (60%), and *joka* is also relatively common (31%). In the data from old literary Finnish, the most common relativizer is *joka* (78%). The second most common relativizer is *kuin* (12%), and *mikä* comes third (5%). As Table 1 shows, *kuhunka*, *kussa*, *kuina*, *kulla*, *kuna*, and *kunka* are no longer used as relativizers in the contemporary data.

Table 1. Relativizers in the Arkisyn corpus and in the dataset from the Agricola corpus (the Gospels of the New Testament).

Relativizer	Arkisyn		Agricola	
	N	%	N	%
<i>joka</i>	293	31	1,340	78
<i>mikä</i>	573	60	85	5
<i>kun, kuin</i>	53	5	199	12
<i>kuka, ken</i>	40	4	17	1
<i>kuhunka</i>	–		23	1
<i>kussa</i>	–		42	3
<i>kuina, kulla, kuna, kunka</i>	–		5	0
Total	959	100	1,711	100

We may ask whether the comparison between a corpus of contemporary conversational Finnish and a corpus of early translations of religious texts is relevant and justified. It is worth noting that Agricola's texts are among the first known texts written in Finnish. In other words, there was no standard language, but rather, Agricola was writing in a language which had so far existed in spoken form. While an important principle of Bible translation was that the resulting text be faithful to the original, so that nothing was added or omitted (e.g., Itkonen-Kaila 1997; see also Salmi 2010), it is also clear that in the Lutheran tradition, of

which Agricola was part, the language in the translation should be based on language used by the ordinary speakers (Tarkiainen & Tarkiainen 1985: 181). According to Nikkilä (1993: 597–601), the language used in the first part of the New Testament, including the Gospels, more closely adheres to Luther’s advice to use language similar to what ordinary speakers would use than the latter parts.² Furthermore, spoken language may have been more likely to offer suitable models for translation of narratives than of other text types in the Bible and are thus a good choice for a comparison to spoken language; the originals in the Gospels were written in a simple, everyday style.³ Given all of this, it is quite unlikely that grammatical constructions which would not have existed in the spoken Finnish at the time and thus would be unfamiliar to contemporaries of Agricola would be used in the translations we discuss here.

Our main idea behind the research setting here is to investigate whether there are insubordinate RCs in old literary Finnish which would be similar in form and function to those we find in contemporary spoken Finnish. Our results show that this indeed is the case. Note, however, that we do not wish to propose that our data from the Agricola corpus is directly comparable to the data from the Arkisyn corpus.

3. Insubordinate relative clauses in Finnish

3.1. Insubordinate relative clauses in contemporary Finnish conversation

Insubordinate RCs are common in contemporary Finnish conversation. In earlier studies on the use of RC constructions in conversational data (Laury & Helasvuo 2015; Helasvuo & Laury 2018; Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma 2022; Laury, Pajusalu & Helasvuo forthcoming), we have shown that free NP heads of RCs are among the most common types of heads when compared to head nouns that have a syntactic role in another clause. In the Arkisyn corpus, more than one fifth (22.3%) of RCs had free NPs as heads. For RCs that were attached to proper main clauses, the most common main clause type, copular clauses, were only

2 We thank Tiina Ruskeepää for bringing this reference to our attention.

3 Tiina Ruskeepää, personal communication, December 9, 2022.

slightly more common than free NPs, accounting for nearly one quarter (24%) of RCs (Laury, Pajusalu & Helasvuo forthcoming). Looking at the issue from another perspective, it can also be seen that functioning as heads of RCs is a fairly common function of free NPs: the proportion of free NPs used as heads of RCs was larger than the overall frequency of use of free NPs in conversation (Helasvuo & Laury 2018: 293).

The in subordinate RCs that occur in our contemporary corpus are often used for presenting a new referent. Example (2) is taken from a conversation where the speaker is talking about the number of seagulls at the marketplace, which has been diminishing of late.

(2) Sapu 115⁴

1 Pasi: *sit sem- **semhone** yks lokki ko o*
 then DEM.ADJ one seagull REL be.3SG
 siin ol
 there be.PST.3SG
 ‘then this one seagull that is was there’

2 *se yhde-n kala-kauppiaa elätti-n,*
 DEM one-GEN fish-monger.GEN pet-ESS
 ‘that was that one fishmonger’s pet’

3 *ko istu-s ain se*
 REL sit-PST.3SG always DEM
 k- kahvi-kopi, hh kato-m pääls siin
 coffee-hut.GEN roof-GEN on there
 ‘that always (used to) sit on the roof of the coffee hut there’

4 Erkki: *ni*
 PTCL
 ‘I see’

5 Pasi: *ni see o jotenki häipy-nys siit*
 so DEM be.3SG somehow disappear-PTCP DEM.ELA
 ‘so it has somehow disappeared from there’

4 The indices after the example number identify the respective conversation in the Arkisyn corpus. SG indexes conversations originally from the University of Helsinki Conversation Analysis Archive. The rest of the data come from the Archive of Finnish and Finno-Ugric Languages at the University of Turku. The indices for the examples from the Agricola corpus refer to the Gospel the example comes from and its location within that Gospel.

6 *ko* *si-tä* *ei* *enää* *ruoki-ta.*
 because DEM-PART NEG.3SG no.longer feed-PASS.CONNEG
 ‘because it’s no longer fed.’

The speaker, Pasi, introduces a particular seagull with the free NP *semmonen yks lokki*, marked as representative of the type (*semmonen* ‘such; that kind’) but specific to the speaker (*yks* ‘one’) (Helasvuo 1988; Vilkuna 1992; Laury 2021; on the use of *üks* as a determiner in Estonian, see Pajusalu 2004). This free NP is then modified by two RCs, both initiated with the relativizer *ko* (lemma *kun*), the first one associating the seagull with a specific fishmonger who kept it as a pet (lines 1–2) and the other one specifying the place where the seagull was always sitting (line 3). These RCs serve to restrict the referent to a particular seagull, and at the same time, to predicate on it: it is one that used to be kept as a pet, and it used to sit in a certain location. The initial NP and the RCs which modify it can be analyzed as an initial detachment (also called a left dislocation, see Lambrecht 2001; Lagae 2007; Amon 2015; Fernandez-Vest 2016). Namely, after Erkki responds with the particle *ni(in)* (line 4), showing understanding and perhaps recognition of what has just been said and an expectation that the speaker will continue (Sorjonen 1999, 2001), Pasi then continues with a clause containing a coreferential pronominal mention, *see* ‘it’, of the just prior free NP head of the RCs (line 5). This clause is initiated with the particle *ni(in)*, commonly used in constructions between initial detachments and the clause that follows it (Hakulinen et al. 2004: §811). Often the *ni*-initial clause involves return to the main line of discussion, such as here, where the bird is brought up as an example of a seagull that has disappeared. Vilkuna (1997: 65) suggests that the particle *ni* “provides a signal of continuation” and is used in contexts where such a signal is needed for processing reasons, for example when a heavy constituent such as a complex NP containing a relative clause is detached and preposed. These are typical contexts for the use of *ni* as a “continuation marker” (Vilkuna 1997: 58).

In contemporary conversation, free NPs often occur in reported speech contexts. Example (3) below is an example of such a use. As is often the case, the free NP is used to create a generic or typical, but imaginary referent; this is a common feature of heads of RCs in general. The participants, two sisters, are talking about the heavy work involved in caring for twins.

(3) SG 438

- 1 *mjoo* ↑*yhde-l* *mu-n, .hhhhm* *entise-l*
 PTCL one-ADE 1SG-GEN former-ADE
työ-kaveri-lla
 work-friend-ADE
 ‘a former colleague of mine’
- 2 *ni, (0.2)* *si-l* *on, hh* *kaksose-th, (0.2)* *ni,*
 PTCL DEM-ADE be.3SG twin-PL PTCL
 ‘so s/he has twins so’
- 3 *(0.2) se* *sano* *että, .hhhh*
 DEM say.PST.3SG COMP
se *ihminen; (.)* *et*
 DEM person COMP
 ‘s/he said that the person’
- 4 *joka* *sano-o* *että* *kaks* *mene-e* *sii-nä*
 REL say-3SG COMP two go-3SG DEM-INE
sama-lla *ku* *yks-ki*
 same-ADE as one-CLT
 ‘who says that two are the same (to manage) as one’
- 5 *ni* *se* *ei* *yhtään* *#tiedä* *et*
 so DEM NEG.3SG at.all know COMP
 ‘so she does not know at all’
- 6 *mi-st* *se* *puhu-[u#].*
 what-ELA DEM talk-3SG
 ‘what she is talking about’

This example has a free NP *se ihminen* in line 3 modified by a *joka* RC (line 4) consisting of the reporting clause *joka sanoo* ‘who says’ with an embedded *että* complement clause consisting of a quote.⁵ In this example, the free NP and the RC modifying it also form an initial detachment; they are followed by a clause initiated with the particle

5 It is very common in the data that the heads of RCs contain demonstratives used either as determiners, as in ex. 1, line 1 and ex. 2, line 3, or as head NPs, as in ex. 3, line 16 (cf. Pajusalu et al. 2018; Pajusalu 2020).

ni and containing a coreferential pronoun mention of the head of the relative clause. The referent is rementioned in lines 5 and 6 with an anaphoric pronoun, the demonstrative *se* used in spoken Finnish for both human and non-human referents. Here the head NP creates a generic referent. Caring for twins, referred to in the quote embedded in the RC, is the main topic of conversation both before and after this segment. It is often the case that the main gist of the utterance, the matter discussed in the upcoming conversation, is mentioned in the RC (see e.g., Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma 2022; Laury, Pajusalu & Helasvuo forthcoming). This is also the case here. It is the relative clause which contains the (imaginary) quote relating to the care of twins, the main topic.

Example 4 is taken from a conversation between four friends celebrating the approach of Christmas together. This example consists of an extended description of a referent involving a string of relative clauses.

(4) SG 355

1 Johanna: *Elmeri-kuntoutuksee, >sano menevänsä,<*
 ‘(she) said she was going to Elmeri rehabilitation,’⁶

2 Jaska: *[jaa,*
 ‘I see,’

3 Mirja: *[mitä o, [mitä Elmeri, kuntoutus o,*
 ‘what is, what is Elmeri rehabilitation’

4 Mikko: *[mikä, mikä o, mikä on El [meri,*
 ‘what, what is, what is Elmeri’

5 Johanna: *[se on se*
 DEM be.3SG DEM
 ‘it’s that’

6 In the longer examples, we follow the convention of providing morphological gloss lines only for the target lines, in this case, the utterances that have RCs. Other lines, which only provide context, such as lines 1–4 in this example, only have translation lines.

- 6 *se on tää psyko-sosiaalinen .hh*
 DEM be.3SG DEM psycho-social
kuntoutus jo-ssa
 rehabilitation REL-INE
 ‘it’s this psychosocial rehabilitation (program) where’
- 7 *tota nii tä-tä hh tyä-n-hallinta-a*
 PTCL PTCL DEM-PART work-GEN-management-PART
 ‘like this workload management’
- 8 *ja .h jaksamis-ta käsitel-lää kans,*
 and wellbeing-PART discuss-PASS also
 ‘and well-being are also discussed’
 (0.2)
- 9 Johanna: *eikä vaa pelkästää fyysistä °kuntoo°,*
 ‘and not just physical condition’
- 10 Mirja: ↓ *aha [a*
 ‘ok’
- 11 Johanna: [*se ol-i se mi-ssä mää-ki ol-i,*=
 DEM be-PST.3SG DEM REL-INE 1SG-CLT be-PST.1SG
 ‘It was the one where I also was,’
- 12 Mikko: =# *ja [a,#*
 PTCL
 ‘I see,’
- 13 Jaska: [*leivottaa savikuppeja*
 ‘you make clay pots’
- 14 *sielä [ja,*
 ‘there and’
- 15 Johanna: [*nii,*
 PTCL
 ‘Yeah,’
- 16 **se kum mää-ki [te-i-n to-n pyramidi-n**
 DEM REL 1SG-CLT make-PST-1SG DEM-ACC pyramid-ACC
 ‘the one where I made that pyramid’

- 17 Jaska: [en-
- 18 Johanna: [*mikä tual on hyllyllä ja,*
REL there be.3SG shelf-ADE and
'that is there on the shelf and'
- 19 *öm (.) si käydää nukkumassa välillä ja rentoudutaa ja,*
'then you take a nap for a bit and relax and,'

Johanna, the hostess of the gathering, mentions a vocational rehabilitation program called Elmeri (line 1). The guests, Mirja and Mikko simultaneously ask what Elmeri is, and Johanna and Jaska go on to try to describe and identify the type of program Elmeri is. Four different RCs are used in this segment as the participants negotiate the nature of the program (lines 6–8, 11, 16, and 18). After Johanna explains that she has participated in an Elmeri program herself, Jaska describes the program as one where clay pottery is made (lines 13–14). Johanna then goes on to again display her own experience in the program: she connects a free NP consisting only of the demonstrative *se* 'it, that, the' to a *kun* RC to further illustrate the rehabilitation program as one where she made a pyramid, and a *mikä* RC embedded in the *kun*-clause, specifying the pyramid as one currently on a shelf in the same room.

It is quite common for RCs in contemporary conversation to have no main clause (according to Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma (2022: 511), 23.8% of RCs do not have a main clause). Such RCs can be used to both introduce new referents with RCs which restrict and predicate on them, and also in referent negotiations. They often occur in contexts of reported speech. We may ask whether insubordinate RCs are a new phenomenon in Finnish. We now turn to our data from old literary Finnish to investigate whether there are insubordinate RCs.

3.2. Insubordinate relative clauses in old literary Finnish

Our analysis of the RC data from the Agricola corpus shows that there are RCs which do not have a main clause but instead are attached to a free NP. This is not very common as only 107 out of 1,771 RCs in our data (6.0%) have free NP heads. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that this is a grammatical resource available also in old literary Finnish.

Example (5) comes from the Gospel of John and contains a free NP head and a RC occurring in the context of reported dialogue (cf. example 3 above).

- (5) John 1:48
- | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1 | <i>Jesus</i> | <i>näk-i</i> | <i>Nathanael</i> | <i>tyge-ns</i> | |
| | J. | see-PST.3SG | N. | towards-POSS.3SG | |
| | <i>tule-ua-n</i> | | | | |
| | come-PTCP-GEN | | | | |
| | ‘Jesus saw Nathanael approach him’ | | | | |
| 2 | <i>Ja</i> | <i>sano-i</i> | <i>heneste /</i> | | |
| | and | say-PST.3SG | 3SG-ELA | | |
| | ‘And said of him’ | | | | |
| 3 | <i>Catzo /</i> | <i>Yxi</i> | <i>totisest</i> | <i>Israelainen</i> | |
| | look-IMP.2SG | one | truly | Israelite | |
| | ‘Look, one true Israelite’ | | | | |
| 4 | <i>io-ssa</i> | <i>ei</i> | <i>ychten</i> | <i>peto-st</i> | <i>ole .</i> |
| | REL-INE | NEG.3SG | nothing.PAR | deceit-PAR | be.CONNEG |
| | ‘in whom there is no deceit.’ | | | | |
| 5 | <i>Nathanael</i> | <i>sano-i</i> | <i>hene-lle /</i> | <i>Mi-ste-s</i> | |
| | N. | say-PST.3SG | 3SG-ALL | what-ELA-CLT | |
| | <i>minu-n</i> | <i>tunnet?</i> | | | |
| | 1SG-ACC | know-2SG | | | |
| | ‘Nathanael said to him, how do you know me?’ | | | | |

Example (5) first describes how Jesus saw Nathanael approach him and then cites what Jesus said of him. The citation (lines 3 and 4) first has the imperative form of the verb *catzo* ‘look’ functioning as an attention-getting element, perhaps already a discourse marker,⁷ followed by a slash, which was used as a punctuation mark in old literary Finnish, similar to a comma in modern written Finnish. This is followed by the

7 One of the anonymous reviewers suggests that *catzo* is functioning here as a discourse marker, possibly no longer a verb; in this way it would be similar to modern spoken Finnish *kato*. Hakulinen & Seppänen (1992) take the position that the motivation of the development of *kato* into a particle lies in the conversational situation. We are in agreement with this position.

free NP *Yxi totisest Israelainen* ‘one true Israelite’ which is further modified by a RC (line 4). The free NP is in the nominative case and serves to characterize the referent as member of a category (Israelites; cf. Pajusalu 2004: 19 on the Estonian *üks* in non-referential mentions in predicative clauses). Although the verb *katsoa* ‘look’ is transitive and could in principle receive an object argument, even if it were analyzed as a verb here, it is clear that the NP *Yxi totisest Israelainen* is not functioning as one because of its case marking: the object of the verb *katsoa* ‘look’ typically is in the partitive case. Instead, it is a free NP which, together with the postmodifying RC, characterizes the referent. Nathanael responds to the characterization indirectly by questioning how Jesus knows him.

Example (6) also comes from a reported speech context where Jesus is talking to Jews in Jerusalem in the Temple area.

(6) John 5:36

1 *Sille ette ne tego-t iotca Ise*
 for COMP DEM.PL deed-PL REL.PL father
 minu-lle anno-i
 1SG-ADE give-PST.3SG
 ‘For those works that Father gave me’

2 / *ette mine ne teiteisin /*
 COMP 1SG DEM.PL fulfill.COND.1SG
 ‘so that I would finish them’

3 *ne sama tego-t iotca mine tee-n*
 DEM.PL same deed-PL REL.PL 1SG do-1SG
 todista-uat minu-sta
 testify-3PL 1SG-ELA
 ‘those same works which I do bear testimony of me’

4 / *ette Ise minu-n lehatt-i.*
 that father 1SG-ACC send-PST.3SG
 ‘that Father sent me.’

In example (6) line 1, the free NP *ne tego-t* ‘those works’ has a RC modifying it. The RC describes the referent of the head, restricting its reference: Jesus is talking about works that Father gave to him to finish.

This is followed by an NP with a postmodifying RC *ne sama tegot iotca mine teen* ‘those same works which I do’ (line 3). This NP functions as the subject of the following clause (‘those same works /---/ bear testimony of me’).

Example (7) comes from the beginning of the Gospel of John. The Gospel first introduces John who was sent by God to bear witness of the Light. This Light was Jesus, who spoke to people, but they did not accept him, but there were some who did.

(7) John 1:11–12

- | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1 | <i>Hen</i> | <i>tul-i</i> | <i>Omi-lle-ns</i> / | |
| | 3SG | come-PST.3SG | own-ALL-POSS.3SG | |
| | ‘He came unto His own,’ | | | |
| | | | | |
| 2 | <i>Ia</i> | <i>hene-n</i> | <i>om-ans</i> | <i>ei-uet</i> |
| | and | 3SG-GEN | own-POSS.3SG | NEG-3PL |
| | <i>hen-de</i> | <i>wastanotta-net.</i> | | |
| | 3SG-PART | receive-PTCP | | |
| | ‘and His own received Him not.’ | | | |
| | | | | |
| 3 | <i>Mutta nin</i> | <i>mon-da</i> | <i>quin</i> | <i>hen-de</i> |
| | but | so | many-PART | REL |
| | | | 3SG-PART | receive-PST-3PL |
| | ‘Yet all who did receive him,’ | | | |
| | | | | |
| 4 | <i>Nij-lle</i> | <i>hen</i> | <i>anno-i</i> | <i>woima-n</i> |
| | DEM.PL-ALL | 3SG | give-PST.3SG | power-ACC |
| | | | <i>Jumala-n</i> | God-GEN |
| | <i>Laps-i-xi</i> | <i>tul-la</i> / | | |
| | child-PL-TRA | become-INF | | |
| | ‘To those he gave the power to become God’s children’ | | | |
| | | | | |
| 5 | <i>Iotca</i> | <i>hen-en</i> | <i>Nime-ns</i> | <i>päle</i> |
| | REL.PL | 3SG-GEN | name-GEN.POSS.3SG | onto |
| | <i>wsko-uat.</i> | | | |
| | believe-PRS.3PL | | | |
| | ‘who believe in his name.’ | | | |

In example (7), it is first stated that Jesus was not welcomed by his own people (line 2), but then, line 3 introduces those who did receive him. This introduction is done with a free NP in the partitive case *monda* ‘many’, followed by a RC restricting the reference of the head. In the

following clause, there is a pronoun *nijlle* ‘to them’ in the allative case functioning as an oblique argument of the verb *antaa* ‘give’. The reference of the pronoun *nijlle* is further restricted and specified with a RC *iotca henen Nimens päle wskouat* ‘who believe in his name’. Thus, the reference is developed and further specified progressively with the help of pronominal references and RCs: of the many who did receive him (line 3), he gave the strength to become God’s children to those who believed in him (lines 4 and 5). The RC in line 3 *quin hende wastanotit* modifies the free NP *monda* and is thus an insubordinated RC, while the RC in line 5 modifies *nijlle* ‘to those’ which is an argument of the clause *nijlle hen annoi woiman Jumalan lapsixi tulla* ‘to those he gave power to become God’s children’.

Example (8) illustrates a RC with the relativizer *mikä*. This relativizer is not very common in the Agricola corpus, as only 5.0% of the RCs in the data are formed with the relativizer *mikä*. Interestingly, when used as a relativizer in our older data, *mikä* occurs in the so-called grammatical cases, the partitive and the nominative, and not in the local cases (except for two occurrences in the adessive case). Instead of *mikä*, *kuhunka* and *kussa* appear in the local cases (cf. Table 1). In the contemporary conversational data, *mikä* is by far the most common relativizer (Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma 2022), while *kuhunka* and *kussa* are not used as relativizers at all. In the modern data, *mikä* is used in the local cases also. The RC in example (8) is embedded in a reported speech context, like it is in examples 3, 5, and 6.

(8) John 16:23

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Totisest totisest sano’ mine tei-lle / Caiki</i> |
| | truly truly say.1SG 1SG 2PL-ALL everything |
| | ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, Everything’ |
| 2 | <i>mi-te te ano-tta Ise-lde minu-n</i> |
| | REL-PART 2PL ask-2PL father-ABL 1SG-GEN |
| | <i>Nim-ee-ni</i> |
| | name-ILL-POSS.1SG |
| | ‘that you ask from Father in my name,’ |
| 3 | <i>se-n hen anda-pi tei-lle.</i> |
| | DEM-ACC 3SG give-PRS.3SG 2PL-ALL |
| | ‘he will give you that.’ |

In example (8), the head NP *caiki* ‘everything’ is a free NP in the nominative case (line 1). It is followed by a RC modifying the head and restricting its reference (line 2). After the RC, there is a transitive clause containing an object NP, the demonstrative *sen* in the accusative case (line 3). The free NP and RC function to introduce a referent which is then predicated upon in the transitive clause with the coreferential demonstrative *sen* (cf. example 2 above). The free NP and RC could be analyzed as an initial detachment (left dislocation). Note, however, that the coreferential mention (line 3) is in the accusative case while the free NP (line 1) is in the nominative.

Examples 5–8 show that RCs with free NP heads serve various functions in old literary Finnish. The RC may characterize the referent of the head restricting its reference, as in (5) and (6), or negotiate reference, as in (7) and (8). Though this construction type is not very common in the data, it still provides a grammatical resource which is available for writers.

3.3. Discussion

We have studied the use of insubordinate RCs in contemporary Finnish conversation examining their functions. In order to find out whether this is a new phenomenon, we have also studied data from old literary Finnish from the 16th century. Our data from the Agricola corpus shows that insubordinate RCs indeed exist in old literary Finnish, even though they are not as common as in the contemporary data compared to the total number of RCs (see Table 2).

Table 2. Insubordinate RCs in the Arkisyn corpus and the dataset from the Agricola corpus (the Gospels).

Data source	N of insubordinate RCs	% of insubordinate RCs of all RCs	Total of RCs (N)	Words in each dataset (N)
Arkisyn	193	20%	956	278,910
Agricola	107	6%	1,771	70,824

Table 2 shows that only 6.0% of RCs are insubordinate in our dataset from the Agricola corpus. In the contemporary corpus, this percentage is considerably higher, 20%. Nevertheless, insubordination of RCs is a grammatical construction type in both data sources. Furthermore, Table 2 shows that RCs are much more common in the data from the Gospels in the Agricola corpus than they are in the Arkisyn corpus: even though the number of words is 4 times bigger in the Arkisyn corpus, the total number of RCs is much smaller ($N = 956$) than in the dataset from the Agricola corpus ($N = 1,771$). This may have to do with the narrative genre in the Gospels.⁸

Our analysis of insubordinate RCs shows that the functions these RCs serve are similar in both datasets. They often appear in quoted speech and may contribute to negotiating reference. The free NP that serves as the head of the RC often introduces a new referent and the RC may either further restrict the reference or predicate upon it, or both. The same relativizers are used in both corpora, although there are differences in frequency. For example, the relativizer *mikä* is by far the most frequently used relativizer in the Arkisyn corpus: almost 60% of RCs have *mikä* as their relativizer (Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma 2022: 508), while only 5% of RCs do in the part of the Agricola corpus which we have examined. However, even in contemporary spoken Finnish, there appear to be considerable areal and dialectal differences in the use frequency of the Finnish relativizers (see Helasvuo, Laury & Rauma 2022: 508–509).

While insubordination of RCs is more common in the Arkisyn corpus than in the data from the Agricola corpus that we examined, we do not assume that this difference in frequency is due to a process of grammaticalization that would have occurred in Finnish since the 16th century. Instead, it appears that the way that insubordinate RCs are used is so similar in the two corpora, as noted above, that the construction has been a resource available to Finnish speakers for a long time and is not a recent innovation.

Further, regarding the process of grammaticalization, it has also been assumed that insubordination develops from subordination (e.g., Evans & Watanabe 2016). This would mean that the development of insubordination would be a counterexample to the tendency of grammaticalization to proceed from pragmatics to grammar, and from

8 We thank Tiina Ruskeepää for her comment on this.

looser pragmatic elements that become more tightly organized, thus ‘grammaticalized’ (see e.g., Beijering et al. 2019: 12–13; Beijering & Norde 2019). For this reason, it may not even be reasonable to assume that the use of RCs with free NPs would have developed from their use with NPs with grammatical roles in full clauses. However, this issue would require more research and likely a separate study where the development of in subordinate RCs from subordinate clauses is concerned.

4. Conclusion

In this article, we study the use of RCs headed by free NPs, that is, NPs that do not have any grammatical role in another clause, in contemporary Finnish conversations and in old written Finnish from the 16th century. The data from the 16th century belong to the earliest records of Finnish language use.

Our analysis shows that in subordination of RCs existed along with subordination already in our data from old literary Finnish. Thus, it is not a recent innovation. The data show that the use of in subordinate RCs is quite similar in our two corpora, although there are differences in frequency. The in subordinate RCs are more rarely used in the older data than in the contemporary data. However, this does not lead us to conclude that there has been a process of further grammaticalization in Finnish that has led to greater use of in subordinate RCs.

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Abbreviations

Symbols used in the transcripts not included in the Leipzig list:
PART – partitive, PTCL – particle.

Data sources

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- Agricola. The morphosyntactic database of Mikael Agricola's works, compiled at the University of Turku. Department of Finnish and Finno-Ugric Languages, University of Turku, and Institute for the Languages of Finland. <https://www.kielipankki.fi/language-bank/>.

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Kokkuvõte. Marja-Liisa Helasvuo, Ritva Laury: Pealauseta relatiivlauseid soome keeles – vanad ja uued. Siinses artiklis käsitleme insubordinatsiooni ehk teiste sõnadega selliseid lauseid, mis loetakse tüüpjuhul kõrvallauseteks, kuid esinevad ilma pealauseta. Uurime soome keele relatiivlauseid, millel puudub pealause. Keeleainestik pärineb kahest korpusest: tänapäeva soome kõnekeelt sisaldavast korpusest Arkisyn ja 16. sajandi keelenäiteid sisaldavast korpusest Agricola. Meie tähelepanekud näitavad, et mainitud konstruktioon esineb mõlemas keelekorpuses, kuid uuemas ainekust on selle kasutamine tavalisem. Osutame oma uurimuses, et nii insubordinatsioon kui subordinatsioon esinevad juba varajastes soome keele tekstides. Seega ei ole ilma pealauseta relatiivlause kasutamine uuem keelenähtus kui pealausega relatiivlause kasutamine. Meie uurimus näitab, et insubordinatsiooni sagedasemat esinemist uuema keeleainestiku relatiivlauseis ei peaks tõlgendama 16. sajandist alates arenema hakanud grammatikaliseerumise nähtusena.

Võtmesõnad: relatiivlause, subordinatsioon, insubordinatsioon, vaba NP, grammatiseerimine, liitlauseid, pealause