

LITHUANIAN NOMINATIVE AND EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES REVISITED

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, a vast literature has emerged investigating different areas of Lithuanian syntax. However, as noted in most state-of-the-art discussions, quite a few problematic and urgent questions still await solutions. These include, among others, the need to establish more fundamental criteria for distinguishing between syntactic units, the revision of the currently accepted methodology for a classification of sentences, as well as directing more attention to such areas of linguistic inquiry as discourse grammar and discourse analysis (cf. Sirtautas 1982a, Balkevičius 1998, Labutis 1998).

The article sets out to demonstrate that the treatment of existential sentences in Lithuanian grammar is one more issue to be dealt with. Due to the lack of defining criteria the distinct existential sentence type, which is so basic and pro-

ductive in Lithuanian, has been classified and analysed as belonging to a variety of diverse syntactic and semantic structures. In view of this, an alternative definition of existential sentences in Lithuanian, based on both semantic and syntactic criteria, is advanced.

The corpus of data used for the analysis of Lithuanian existential sentences was provided by the Section of Computational Linguistics at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. The examples were put into the FileMaker programme, and 2,000 entries containing different grammatical forms of the verb *būti* 'to be' were chosen for further study. A coding scheme was developed to cover the main distinctions that were thought important for the examination of 'be'-sentences. Then each example was coded according to morphological, syntactic and pragmatic criteria.

2. 'BE'-SENTENCES: THE PROBLEM

The grammar of 'be'-sentences in English and in other Indo-European languages has long been a field of intensive scholarly research. Interest in this area of syntax has been revived for several reasons. It has been argued that lexical items cor-

responding to English 'be' and 'have' behave in the same way in many languages. Consequently, numerous studies have set out to explore the manifold syntactic and semantic interrelations posited between these two verbs. Next, a close relation

has been assumed between *existential* and *possessive* constructions (cf. Benveniste 1966, Lyons 1967, 1971, Lehiste 1969, Christie 1970, Boadi 1971, Isačenko 1974, Clark 1978, Lipińska 1980, Pande 1981, 1990, Quirk et al. 1985: 1411; Seliv-erstova 1990, Freeze 1992, Belvin and den Dikken 1997, Heine 1997, Muromatsu 1997). This relationship is borne out in the examples below:

(1) This room *has* two windows.

(2) *There are* two windows in this room.

It is a widely accepted view that 'be'-sentences are central to the grammar of any language. As regards Lithuanian scholarly descriptions of the topic, observations related to 'be'-sentences in general and existential sentences in particular occur as by-products of other studies in syntax (cf. Valeika 1974, Sirtautas 1982b: 66, Usonienė 1983: 15, Marcinkevičienė 1997, Lukšytė 1998: 50). It has to be pointed out at the outset that there is no unified study devoted to the existential sentence type in Lithuanian. Hence, the descriptions of the verb *būti* 'be, exist' and the treatment of 'be'-sentences must be gleaned from a variety of sources.

The 1971 *Morphology* volume of the *Academy Grammar*, *Grammatika litovskogo jazyka* (1986), *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika* (1996), the 1997 *Lithuanian Grammar* and *A functional grammar of Lithuanian* (Valeckienė 1998) give one or two-page descriptions of the verb *būti* 'be'. The accounts are limited to presenting the conjugational patterns of the verb and stating semantic differences between the suppletive finite forms of *būti*, created from different stems. Of a wider interest and, therefore, more fully discussed has been the issue of the 3rd person present tense form of *būti* 'yra', the most mysterious form in the whole paradigm (cf. Stang 1963, Kazlauskas 1968, Stepanov 1970, Palmaitis 1984).

The scholarly grammars and dictionaries of Lithuanian treat *būti* and its suppletive forms as a single polysemantic lexical item, but there is a long-standing tradition in Lithuanian scholarship of distinguishing between a *copula*, or tense carrier *būti*, and a *lexical verb būti*. For instance, the *Academy Dictionary* (Vol.1, 1968: 1213–1216) provides a classification of variants of the verb, separating those with 'existential' and other lexical meanings (with 7 instances listed) from the others. Under other functions of *būti* come the uses as a copula, an auxiliary, and an intensifier of verb meaning. Grammars, as a rule, discuss the function of *būti* as an auxiliary in chapters on morphology with respect to compound (periphrastic) finite forms of the Lithuanian verb. *Būti* as a copula gets coverage in sections on syntax which examine a grammatical form of the compound nominal predicate and simple sentence patterns (*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 502–507, 572–621, *Lithuanian Grammar*: 468–470, 599–674). As a verb of existence, *būti* is referred to in Grenda (1982: 35), Ambrazas (1986b: 20), Paulauskienė (1994: 123), Balkevičius (1998: 30). However, to the best of my knowledge, not a single reference book provides a principled account of *būti* as an existential verb, except for the entries found in the *Academy Dictionary* mentioned above. It does not come as a surprise, then, that the existential sentence (as defined in this article) is not fully recognised in its own right in any pedagogical or scholarly grammar of the Lithuanian language.

It can be stated in this connection that the absence of a clear distinction between the existential and other uses of the verb *būti* gives rise to a number of inconsistencies in the treatment of *be*-sentences in Lithuanian. Different classifications subsume sentences with *būti* (and existential sentences, for that matter) under different

headings. Thus, some sentences with *būti* are classed among 'verbal' sentences (the N_{nom} - Vf-AdvLoc pattern) as in (3), with no explicit statement as to their existential meaning (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 621):

(3) Dešinėje buvo pieva.

'On the right (there) was a meadow'

Examples in (4–7), on the other hand, are assigned to a nominal, i.e. a 'non-verbal' type. Moreover, it is asserted that all the sentences, except for (7), exhibit the impersonal two-member sentence pattern Vf_{cop}-N_{nom} (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 649), disregarding the presence of a temporal and a locative adverbial in (5) and (6) respectively. These latter two examples, in fact, represent the basic type of existential sentence in inflectional languages with an SVO word order. Consider:

(4) Buvo žiema.

'It was winter'

(5) Vakar buvo audra.

'There was a storm yesterday'

(6) Klasėje buvo mirtina tylą.

'There was a dead silence in the classroom'

(7) Gražus paupys. Kalvos. Lakštingalos.

'Beautiful riverside. Hills. Nightingales.'

Būti 'be' in these sentences is claimed to function as a copular verb in the same way as it does in example (8) (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 642):

(8) Petras yra darbininkas.

'Peter is a worker'

However, I take issue with this assumption. From my point of view, what we have in (5) and (6) is an existential predication, by means of which the existence of the phenomena referred to is stated. *Būti* in example (8), on the other hand, is a copula whose function is to express the relation of equivalence; as such, it simply assigns the subject referent to a certain class. According to Lithuanian grammars, example (7) has a zero

copula; in Lithuanian syntax this sentence type is termed *nominative sentence* (a more detailed analysis of the issue is taken up below).

The treatment of negative forms of *būti* and negated 'be'-sentences displays analogous problems (cf. *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* Vol. 8, 1970: 670). Predicates with *būti* (and *likti* 'remain') undergo a more detailed analysis due to the genitive case marking on the subject NP under negation (*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 582–585; *Lithuanian Grammar*: 666–668 and passim). Traditionally, the negative form of the verb *būti* 'be', which is classified as an intransitive lexical verb, is associated with the impersonal, predicate-object (Vf-N_{gen}) sentence pattern, while the subject NP in an affirmative variant with *yra* 'is' as in example (10) is marked nominative and is treated as a personal subject-predicate sentence pattern (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 629):

(9) Nėra jokios išeities.

'There is no way out'

(10) Yra išeitis.

'There is a way out'

Most grammars observe (cf. *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 625; *Lithuanian Grammar*: 666, 668) that a number of intransitive verbs, *būti* 'be' first and foremost, when used with negation, require the genitive rather than the nominative subject 'when the existence of something is denied' (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 666); this rule applies to 'sentence patterns with and without an adverbial of place' [my italics in both quotes, V.K.] (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 668). To account for the phenomenon, the idea of the scope of negation is invoked. However, no attempt is made to establish any link between the apparently different syntactic behaviour of sentences with *būti* in the affirmative and negative forms, on the one hand, and the linguistic expression of the

notion of existence, on the other. It is the aim of this article to demonstrate the validity of this particular link.

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that the distinction between the existential and the copula *būti* 'be' in Lithuanian is obvious. Moreover, the lexical and functional differences between the copula and the verb of existence is fully established in the literature; what remains to carry through is that this difference is recognised on both, lexical/semantic and syntactic levels.

In Lithuanian, as in a number of other Indo-European languages, both the copula and the lexical verb 'be' share the same forms but differ in their syntactic behaviour. We can forcefully argue then that 'be'-sentences in Lithuanian fall into two syntactically distinct types depending on which of the two *būti* 'be' appears in the sentence. In the first type, the verb 'be' is a copula and performs the function of a grammatical mor-

pheme, it is a service word introduced to carry tense distinctions (cf. examples (11–12) below).

(11) *Beržas yra medis.*

'The birch is a tree'

(12) *Tai buvo vienintelis mano gyvenime šūvis.*

'That was the only shot in my life'

In the second, existential type, there is an overt or underlying lexical verb *būti* 'be' with an existential meaning, as in (13):

(13) *Tibete yra dvi vienuoliškų rūbų vilkėjimo tradicijos ...*

'In Tibet there are two ways of wearing monk habits'

Natural languages rarely (if ever) produce exclusively regular paradigms of linguistic phenomena. As regards 'be'-sentences in Lithuanian, it has to be stressed that our corpus of data contains a number of uses of *būti* 'be' which are not easy to assign to one or the other clear-cut sentence type referred to above.

3. ON THE VALIDITY OF THE TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF EXISTENTIAL SENTENCES IN LITHUANIAN

It is a commonly recognised fact that existential sentences in the world's languages tend to develop a cluster of morphological, syntactic, and lexical properties which formally set them off from other types of sentences.

In Lithuanian, unlike English, the existential marker in existential sentences (henceforth ES) is not overtly manifested. Moreover, from a syntactic point of view Lithuanian ESs are not special constructions for providing a compensatory subject, as is the case in English. As such, the existential type in Lithuanian does not present any major syntactic problems and has not been discussed along the lines of its counterpart in English.

Traditionally, Lithuanian grammars ascribe the semantic status of 'existential sentence' to one of the subtypes of nominal sentence, the so-called *nominative sentence*. In addition to example (7), the following four (14–17) may be taken as representative examples:

(14) *Pavasario plati padangė!*

'What a wide sky of the spring!'

(15) *Kovo pabaiga. Iš nakties gražiai pašalę.*

'(It is) end of March. It was slightly freezing last night.'

(16) *Klasė. Rytas. Mokiniai renkasi.*

'A classroom. (It is) morning. The schoolchildren are gathering.'

(17) *Vakaras. Tyla.*

'(It is) evening. *Silence*.

Also included under the label of the nominal sentence is a variety of sentence patterns with a *compound nominal predicate*, i.e. a predicate consisting of a noun or an adjective and a copular verb (*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 612; *Lithuanian Grammar*: 642).

The *nominative-existential* type is distinguished in most descriptions of present-day Lithuanian syntax. This approach seems to accord with the claim put forward by some Russian scholars (Peškovskij 1938, Šachmatov 1941, Vinogradov 1947, Švedova 1967, Zolotova 1973) who argue that nominative-existential sentences are used to denote states of affairs, temporal concepts and natural phenomena; as such, this type is assumed to convey the idea of 'being/existence'. In Lithuanian grammars, the nominative-existential sentence type is claimed to perform a number of functions. Instances of the type are used to state the occurrence of events, to inform about existence or appearance of a thing or a phenomenon, to notify about a general situation (Balkevičius 1963: 146, Labutis 1967: 124, *Lithuanian Grammar*: 649, Sirtautas and Grenda 1988: 27, Valeckienė 1998: 71). By naming an entity or a phenomenon, the nominative-existential sentence is claimed to assert its existence (*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 617, Labutis 1998: 136). When used in its introductory function, this clause type may serve as a setting for further events; in fact, the nominative type often appears in stage directions and is typically employed in descriptive prose as a stylistically marked form of expression.

However, the traditional interpretation of existential sentences as constituting a sub-class within the nominal sentence type characterised by the syntactic sentence patterns exemplified above (cf. (7), (14)–(17)) should be challenged on several grounds.

3.1 How existential is the nominative type?

The above discussion was meant as a brief introduction to the state of the art of the problems involved. Our next step is to highlight the inconsistencies of the traditional approach towards existential sentences in Lithuanian. With this in mind, we will first evaluate the nominative sentence type with respect to the syntactic, semantic and functional properties it is claimed to hold and then will offer a new definition of this type of sentence.

In natural languages the assertion of equivalence can take different forms. Some languages make use of the copula, the grammatical marker of equivalence, in others it is the nominal sentence that is employed to that end.

There are various manifestations of the nominal sentence in world languages. What is common to them is that under certain conditions these linguistic structures allow or require that the predicate nominative be sufficient.

Quirk et al. (1985: 845) treat simple block language messages as non-sentences, which consist of a noun or a noun phrase or a nominal clause in isolation (e.g. 'Entrance'). No verb is needed, because all the necessary information pertaining to the understanding of the message is provided by the context. Furthermore, 'block language' can be regarded as existential (Quirk et al. 1985: 1403). Words like 'Fire!' or 'No entry' function as complete propositions within the context they appear, conveying the following message: '*There is a fire in this building; look to your own safety!*' (Hanson 1969: 310), or '*There is no entry*'. Popova (1970: 180) makes an interesting claim to the effect that even though the sentences cited above have the same structural base (i.e. the nominative noun), they nevertheless differ in meaning. 'No entry' could be considered as expressing an

existential statement, while cases like 'Fire!' convey an assertion of a transitional character of an event.

Having briefly specified the problem, we are now ready to take a closer look at the nominal sentence (in the form of the predicate nominative, examples (7) and (14)–(17)) in relation to the existential assertion it is claimed to express.

One aspect of our counter-analysis as to the existential meaning inherent in the nominative type addresses the very nature of the sentence type under discussion. First, it is a debatable issue whether the nominative sentence could be assigned an existential reading at all. As regards the nominal assertion, it is characterised as being essentially timeless, impersonal, nonmodal, stating a general truth, outside all relation to the speaker. To put it another way, the nominal sentence expresses semantic content alone (cf. Benveniste 1966). This is exactly the meaning conveyed by the nominative type used, for example, in stage directions.

A further point of controversy, as we see it, resides in the very formulation of the traditional definition. In brief, our counter-argument comes down to the following. Lithuanian grammars claim that a characteristic feature distinguishing the nominative sentence from other types of impersonal nominal sentence is that the *nominative* type commonly appears *without a copula*; as regards its semantic function, the nominative element is asserted to inform about the existence of a thing or a phenomenon (*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 617; *Lithuanian Grammar*: 649–650). What lies at the bottom of this definition, then, is the copulative (identifying) existence of an entity (cf. Benveniste 1966, Kahn 1973, Zima 1998). Otherwise, how could it happen that in such 'existential' sentences a zero form of a copular (and *not existential*) verb, devoid of any lex-

ical meaning, is able to express the notion of existence?

Our next observation with regard to the examples under discussion is that the relationship which obtains between the meaning of a linguistic expression and the things denoted by it is intuitively felt to be not that of 'existence'; what we have to do with in these utterances is the phenomenon of 'presentational deixis' (cf. Lambrecht 1998: 39). Consider:

- (7) a. Gražus paupys. Kalvos. Lakštingalos.
'Beautiful riverside. Hills. Nightingales.'
(7) b. What we see here is beautiful riverside and hills.
We can also hear nightingales singing.
(16) a. Klasė. Rytas. Mokiniai renkasi.
'A classroom. (It is) morning. The schoolchildren are gathering.'
(16) b. What is shown on the stage is a classroom. It is morning. The schoolchildren are gathering.

In sentences like (7a) the existence of entities referred to is presupposed; the function of such utterances is to call the attention to the *presence* (and *not existence*, for that matter) of some person or thing, to inform about the state of affairs, or to serve as a background for other events. Such an interpretation is corroborated by the fact that the verb *būti* 'be', which is the principal marker of existence in inflectional languages, cannot be inserted into a nominative sentence like (7):

- (7) c. *Yra gražus paupys.
*'There is beautiful riverside'

This aspect of grammatical behaviour on the part of the nominative sentence is supported by data from Russian, another inflectional language (cf. Zolotova 1973, Arutiunova 1976).

One more instance in favour of a non-existential interpretation of the nominative sentence is associated with a spatial/temporal value of 'being' and 'existence'. As noted by Seliverstova (1990: 69), the nominative sentence, whose pri-

mary function is to name or identify, does not locate an entity inside certain space. As to the nominative utterance like the one exemplified in (16), we claim that by virtue of its semantic content the nominal element itself stands for a location which the subsequent sentences are anchored to.

The absence of an obligatory locative element in a nominative-existential sentence has induced some authors to treat it as 'a modified variant of an existential sentence' (cf. Arutiunova and Širiaev 1983: 47). There is more to the problem, though: in order to be assigned an existential reading, a nominative utterance has to meet certain conditions. This reading is possible, first of all, if we interpret examples like (17a) as a reduction of a two-member clause in (17b):

(17) a. Vakaras. *Tyla.*

'(It is) evening. Silence.'

(17) b. *Visur/aplinkui/miške tyla.*

'There is silence everywhere/around/in the forest'

Furthermore, the interpretation holds when the missing locative element can be readily available somewhere else in the text thus being contextually attached to the nominative sentence in question (cf. Arutiunova and Širiaev 1983, loc.cit.). This is a characteristic feature of nominative sentences that appear in poetic writing. We can generalise, then, that the nominative sentence in its classical form can mean a lot of things, but never 'existence' outside a very limited context.

Returning to the problem at hand, it has to be specified that this *ad hoc* interpretation of existentiality is applicable only to a small sub-set of nominative sentences. What we want to claim at this point is that the problem of the nominative-existential sentence needs to be addressed from a different angle. Most literature in the field (Balkevičius 1963, Labutis 1967, 1976, 1998,

Popov 1968, Popova 1970, Sirtautas and Grenda 1988) has analysed this type of utterance in isolation, as a matrix model of an existential assertion. It is worthwhile to restate at this point that existential sentences are well studied in world languages. Even more so, there is no disagreement over the most common syntactic pattern of existential sentences, which is claimed to consist of *an indefinite noun phrase, a verb of existence, and a locative element*. Our argument, then, is to the effect that the issue of the nominative-existential sentence should be approached from the opposite direction: how about evaluating the nominative type with respect to a regular, that is, a *Locative + be + NP* existential sentence pattern? Seen in this light, the nominative-existential utterance emerges as a formally, semantically, and stylistically marked mode of expression. For one thing, it is a very special construction from a syntactic point of view; not only is an existential verb missing (which is a possible structure for an ES in Lithuanian), but a locative element is not present in the sentence either. Finally, such utterances are marked stylistically (cf. Popov 1968). Due to the compact form and a condensed semantic content, this type has a limited area of appearance: more often than not such sentences are used in descriptive prose and poetry. Consider in this respect the examples of the nominative sentence presented above and example (18) below:

(18) *Laukas, kelias, pieva, kryžius,*

Šilo juosta mėlyna,

Debesėlių tankus izas

Ir gaudi gaudi daina. (J. Aistis)

'A field, a road, a meadow, a cross,

A blue ribbon of a grove,

A thick floe of tiny clouds

And a very very sad song.'

Given the facts presented above, we can conclude that none of the formal or semantic properties of the nominative sentence in the contexts we have explored it permit us to assign the nominal element and, consequently, the nominative type the status of a unequivocal formula asserting 'existence' on its own. Moreover, from our point of view there is enough ground to claim that *nominative* and *existential* sentences are two distinct types of expression. At best, some instances of the nominative sentence can be treated as representing one of the (marginal) syntactic patterns that an existential type can take in Lithuanian (cf. example (17)).

4. RELEVANCE OF A NEW APPROACH

In view of the above discussion, an alternative definition of existential sentences in Lithuanian can be advanced to the effect that *an existential sentence is one which contains a subject, a verb indicating existence or appearance, and an overt or implicit locative expression*. Kuno (1971: 332) claims that this structure of existential sentences is basic for SVO languages. Thus the unmarked pattern of ESs in Lithuanian is represented by the following:

(19) Ant tėvų trobos yra žaibolaidis.

'There is a lightning conductor on my parents' house'

(20) Bet štai per švento Baltramiejaus atlaidus ... pasirodė Dirmeikis.

'But once, on Saint Baltramiejus' day, there appeared Dirmeikis'

It deserves to be added that it is this particular pattern that is assigned the status of 'an existential sentence' in Lithuanian by Mathiassen (1996: 183). This is the only source I am aware of which, with regard to Lithuanian, uses the term

Another immediate consequence of the interpretation of the nominative type presented here is that the nominative-existential type as defined in Lithuanian scholarship can on no counts serve as the archetype of existential sentences in Lithuanian. Due to the fact that the nominative type was conceived of as a model of the existential sentence, defined on the basis of the copulative (identifying) type of expression, the prototypical syntactic form (according to the definition proposed here) has naturally resisted recognition as the basic type of the ES in Lithuanian.

'existential sentence' in its commonly accepted sense.

It should be stressed that due to the high inflectional character of Lithuanian the existential type allows for a wide variation in terms of word order patterns; what is more, in some special contexts the constituents specified in the definition can be dispensed with.

Presented below is a preliminary analysis of the existential type in Lithuanian. Several related areas will be looked into, such as (i) structural patterns of ESs, (ii) word order patterns, (iii) semantic types of ESs, and (iv) non-existential counterparts.

4.1 Structural patterns of existential sentences

Language-specific properties make it possible for a variety of lexical items with different semantic specifications to fill the syntactic positions of the basic pattern, thus rendering two distinct schemata of ES in Lithuanian:

1. *Locative/temporal element—verb of existence—name of the entity:*

(13) Tibete yra dvi vienuoliškų rūbų vilkėjimo tradicijos ...

'In Tibet there are two ways of wearing monk habits'

(21) Dabar baisiau negu anais laikais – yra plėšikų, pabėgusių kalinių.

'It is more frightening these days than before—there are plunderers and escaped convicts'

2. *Name of the class of entities—verb of existence—name of an entity, which belongs to the class stated:*

(22) Ir tarp jo bendraamžių yra tokių, kurie iškilo... bet yra ir tokių, kurie sėdi kalėjimuose...

'Among his contemporaries there are many who have achieved a lot, but there are some who are in prison'

A special type of existential sentence (Kalėdaitė 2000) is exemplified in (23) and (24) below:

(23) *Nėra kas jai būtų gerą rimbą parodęs.*

'There was no one to teach her a lesson'

(24) *Nebuvo kur padėti šitą šukę.*

'There was no place to put this bit of glass'

These are instances of what (*Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 584–5) refers to as 'a petrified negative construction'. The verb *būti* 'be' in this case takes the pronoun *kas* 'who' or the adverbs *kur* 'where', *kada* 'when', or *kaip* 'how' as their complements, which, in turn, are followed by another lexical verb. The primary function of such sentences is to deny the existence of certain circumstances, an object or an agent of the action (cf. *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika*: 584–5).

4.2 Word order in ESs

The main principle governing the actual arrangement of lexical items in Lithuanian utterances is communicative (cf. Ambrasas 1986a). As is not

ed in *Lithuanian Grammar*, 'Word order in Lithuanian is a means of signifying the functional (theme-rheme) sentence perspective and, to a much lesser degree, the syntactic relations between sentence constituents' (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 690). A syntactic function of sentence elements is expressed through case morphology. Structurally fixed word order applies mostly to the placement of prepositions, the interrogative particle, negation and attributive clauses (*Lithuanian Grammar*: 691). Consequently, existential sentences, as any other type of utterance, can be structured in accordance with the communicative intention. Examples (25)–(26) are instances of affirmative existentials which will be shown to take quite different word order patterns. Thus (25) is a classical schema *Loc + be + NP*; (26) demonstrates the pattern *Loc + NP + be*:

(25) *Jeigu žinai, kad miške yra vilkas ir jo bijai – neini į mišką.*

'If you know that there is a wolf in the forest and that you are afraid of it—then you simply don't go there'

(26) *Dar priekaištai, kad per mažai surinkta, girdi, dar bažnyčiose, vienuolynuose nemaža sidabro yra.*

'And yet they reprimand us because too little has been gathered, they have heard that there still could be found quite a lot of silver in churches and monasteries'

The sentence in (27), on the other hand, is an example of a locative element placed finally, i.e. *be + NP + Loc*:

(27) *Be bejo, nemaža lietuvių studijuoja Prancūzijoje, yra mokslininkų Prūsijoje, nes čia jie neranda dirvos savo veiklai.*

'Of course, quite a few Lithuanians are studying in France, there are scholars in Prussia, because they don't find a suitable milieu for their activities here'

Negated existential sentences (NES) are equally varied in structure. Example (28) exhib-

its a common, *Loc + be + NP*, pattern. It is interesting to note that the subject NP, even though definite in form, has an indefinite meaning. The utterance in (29) shows the reversal ordering of constituents, i.e. *NP + be + Loc*:

- (28) *Bet gerai žinome, kad niekur nėra antros Kernavės.*
 'But we all know perfectly well that there is no second Kernavė/that a second Kernavė does not exist'

- (29) *Vamzdynų beveik arba visiškai nėra Afrikoje (išskyrus Alžyrą), Pietų Amerikoje, Australijoje, Rytų Azijoje.*
 'There are none or almost none pipelines in Africa (with the exception of Algeria), South America, Australia, and East Asia'

The two examples below show quite singular sentence patterns. A locative item in (30) is replaced by a prepositional phrase (PP) in the genitive case specifying an entity talked about; the PP then is followed by an indefinite NP, while a focused negative form of the verb *būti* 'be' appears in final position:

- (30) *Apie dvasininkų skaičių tikslių žinių nėra.*
 'There are no accurate statistics about the number of clergymen'

As for example (31), its surface structure looks similar to that of (30). And yet (31) is a case in point to illustrate another linguistic phenomenon, i.e. a semantic similarity between existential and possessive constructions. Another way to render the meaning of (31a) is to use the verb 'to have'. Consider:

- (31) a. *Mankštai poilsio dienų nėra!*
 'There are no days-off for keeping oneself in shape'
 (31) b. *Mankšta poilsio dienų neturi.*
 'Keeping oneself in shape does not have days-off'

The final point to be looked at is the semantic types of ESs which can be claimed to exist in Lithuanian and their non-existential counterparts.

4.3 Semantic types of ESs and their non-existential counterparts

Below is a preliminary sketch of semantic types of ESs in Lithuanian. It is clear from the examples that all the types of ES posited, for example, for English are as well attested in our corpus of data:

1. *Ontological ESs*:

- (42) *Gal tu tiki, jog iš tiesų yra vaiduoklių ar piktuju dvasių?*
 'Do you really believe that there are ghosts and evil spirits?'

2. *Locative-existential sentences*:

- (43) *Mano šeimos archyve yra tas pirkimo-pardavimo dokumentas, sudarytas 1906 m.*
 'In my family archives there is that contract of purchase drawn up in 1906'

3. *Existential-presentative clauses*:

- (34) *Aplink Juodsodę yra daug Dirmeikių, tai ir tie Dirmeikiai emė ieškoti giminystės.*
 'Around Juodsodė there are a lot of people called Dirmeikiai, so even these started looking for kinship'
 (35) *Gyveno seniau toks gaspadorius.*
 'Once upon a time there lived a farmer'

As regards non-existential counterparts, a semantic similarity between existential and possessive constructions has been well-documented in a number of studies. The 'have'-existential clauses in many languages are considered to be the commonest type of lexical paraphrase expressing a similar semantic content (Lyons 1967, Quirk et al. 1985: 1411, Freeze 1992, among others). Lithuanian, too, confirms this pattern. Even more so, it offers a good evidence for Isačenko's (1974) claim that most of the European languages could be sub-grouped typologically according to their preference for 'have' or 'be' constructions to express the semantic notion of possessivity.

Lithuanian, a former 'be' language in this respect, in the course of its historical evolution has switched to the 'have' possessive device (cf. Birbaum 1978, Isačenko 1974, Steponavičiūtė 1982). It could be mentioned in this connection that one of the semantic functions of the old Indo-European lexeme **es-* or its substitutes, in Benveniste's (1971: 164) words, has been to provide the construction of "to be-to" for "to have"'. This is exactly the case in (31a) above and (36) below:

(36) a. Viskam, pasirodo, yra taisyklės.

'It appears that there are rules for everything'

(36) b. Viskas, pasirodo, turi savo taisykles.

'Everything has got its own rules'

It remains to be added that in accordance with the definition of existential sentences proposed here, some instances of the nominative type (exemplified in (17)) can be assume under the label of non-existential counterparts. First and foremost, this applies to cases when the nominative sentence is provided with some implicit or contextual locative anchoring in the running text.

5. SUMMARY

The relevant points of the discussion presented in the article can be briefly summarised as follows. Of the recurring themes of the discussion, two in particular are worth recalling. One major theme is an important criticism against the traditional claim as to the existential character of the so-called *nominative-existential* type. The arguments advanced against the traditional treatment of the ES type support the need for a new definition of the ES, which is proposed on

the basis of semantic and syntactic criteria. Another area of controversy under discussion is related to a wider issue of 'be'-sentences. This aspect was discussed in relation to the lexical values and the syntactic function of the verb *būti* 'be'. It was argued that two distinct types of 'be'-sentences should be distinguished in Lithuanian, namely, existential and copulative constructions, depending on which of the verb 'be' – lexical or copula – appears in the sentence.

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NAUJAS POŽIŪRIS Į LIETUVIŲ KALBOS NOMINATYVINIUS IR EGZISTENCINIUS SAKINIUS

Violeta Kalėdaitė

Santrauka

Plaćiaja prasme, straipsnis nagrinėja vieną iš lietuvių kalbos sintaksės aspektų – sakinių klasifikacijos principus ir šiame procese išskylančias problemas. Kritiškai analizuodama nusistovėjusį semantinių egzistencinių sakinių tipo apibrėžimą ir jo vietą sakinių klasifikacijoje, autorė parodo lietuvių kalbotyroje įsitvirtinusio požūrio neadekvatumą nagrinėjamam reiškiniumi. Egzistencinius lietuvių kalbos sakinius įprasta traktuoti kaip atskirą nominatyvinių beasmenių sakinių pogrupį, išskiriant juos semantinio turinio ir atliekamos funkcijos pagrindu. Autorė pateikia nemaža argumentų, parodančių tokios traktuotės ribotumą. Pirmiausia, abejojama, ar nominatyviniai sakiniai, susidedantys tik iš vieno elemento (daiktavardžio vardininko), savo reikšme gali atstoti egzis-

tenčinę predikaciją. Antra, tradicinis egzistencinių sakinių apibrėžimas lietuvių kalboje remiasi tapatumo (identifikacinės egzistencijos) ryšiu, o tai nėra skiriamasis egzistencinių sakinių klasifikacijos principas, taikomas šiam sakinių tipui kitose pasaulio kalbose. Nominatyviniai sakiniai neatitinka ir dar vieno egzistencinių sakinių bruožo – glaudaus "buvimo, egzistencijos" ryšio su laiko ir erdvės lokalizacija. Šios kritinės analizės pagrindu autorė siūlo naują lietuvių kalbos egzistencinių sakinių tipo apibrėžimą ir aptaria kai kuriuos šiems sakiniams būdingus aspektus, kaip antai: sakinio struktūrinius elementus, žodžių tvarkos modelius bei semantinius egzistencinių sakinių tipus.

[teikta

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