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**TRANSIMPERSONAL CONSTRUCTIONS IN LITHUANIAN:
TOWARDS THE EMERGENCE OF SPLIT INTRANSITIVITY
(Addendum et corrigendum to Piccini 2008)**

1. Introduction

Impersonal constructions have attracted the attention of many scholars, both in the field of Indo-European linguistics (Seeffranz-Montag 1983; Lambert 1998; Bauer 2000; Barðal 2004; Siewierska 2008) and also, more recently, in the field of typology (Malchukov, Siewierska 2011). In particular, recent studies conducted from a cross-linguistic perspective have shown the close interrelation between a particular type of impersonal construction, known as “transimpersonal construction”, and the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns (see *inter al.* Malchukov 2008; Mithun 2008; Malchukov, Ogawa 2011).

Using these recent advances as a springboard, this article re-evaluates in a new light several constructions regarded as “impersonal” in Lithuanian reference grammars, with the aim of reinterpreting them as transimpersonal.

According to Malchukov (2008, 77), the term “transimpersonal construction” was coined by Haas (1941), in a work devoted to studying the Tunica language. It was used to denote a construction that looks like a transitive construction but involves a dummy subject or a default subject agreement as well as a single core argument that is encoded as the object of prototypical action verbs. These are transitive impersonal constructions in which the Experiencer receives the case marking of the object and the Agent is removed from the argument structure. The hypothesis that some semantically inactive intransitive verbs could be analyzed as transitive can be traced back to Sapir (1917), who wrote in his review of Uhlenbeck: “Thus, forms like ‘I sleep’ or ‘I think’ could be understood as meaning properly ‘It sleeps me’, ‘It seems to me’” (Sapir 1917, 85).

Despite the heavy criticism of this fascinating intuition both on the functional and the formal level (Merlan 1985), the idea has recently been revived in a series of typological studies (see contributions to Donohue, Wickmann 2008 and to Malchukov, Siewierska 2011). In particular, although the connection between impersonal constructions and Split Intransitivity is often difficult to explain synchronically, it has proven to be powerful from a diachronic perspective.

Transimpersonal constructions constitute a “bridge” between constructions characterized by non-referential subjects (R-impersonals in Malchukov’s terminology), and non-volitional constructions (A-impersonals). From a diachronic point of view, constructions with non referential, indefinite and generic subjects tend to be reinterpreted as intransitive impersonal constructions with patientive subjects, through a transimpersonal phase. It is worth noting that parameters such as referentiality and agentivity /volitionality belong to different arguments. In the source construction (R-impersonal) it is the Agent that is indefinite and generic: thus the Agent, in contrast to the prototypical subject - which is referential - does not have “absolute reference”, in Keenan’s terms. In the target construction (A-impersonals), on the other hand, it is the patient-subject that is non-volitional and does not control the action described by the verb.

The present study will take as its basis the multifactorial notion of subject, which is fundamental for an analysis of phenomena involving the syntactic-semantic interface (see Keenan 1976; Comrie 1989). Keenan (1976) identified about thirty properties he considered to be universal characteristics of basic subjects, i.e. of the subjects of “semantically basic sentences”. He divided them into three categories: coding properties (case marking, agreement with the verb and the order of constituents in languages with a fixed word order), behavioural properties (accessibility to relativisation, raising, control of raising and equi-deletion etc.) and pragmatic or functional properties (topicality, definiteness, agentivity etc.).

In the constructions that will be analyzed here, the single argument introduced by intransitive predicates, i.e. the “logical subject”, shows deviations from the prototype with regard to coding, and, as we will see, this has consequences and repercussions on the syntactic level as well. Non-canonical encoding of this core argument in the accusative case is justified diachronically, inasmuch as these arguments are originally O arguments.

Therefore these constructions can be viewed as impersonal constructions that derive from canonical transitive constructions. With some verbs the foundations are laid for O to be promoted to S_o.¹

In the present study, I will not be dealing with basic subjects, but rather with subjects deriving from “basic objects”. Thus a caveat is mandatory if Keenan’s work is to be taken as the reference framework. When addressing the issues discussed in Section 6, which are devoted to the syntactic behavior of such arguments, it should be kept in mind Keenan’s statement that “in general, non-basic subjects are never more subject-like than basic-subjects” and therefore that “syntactically derived subjects are, by our tests, usually somewhat less subject-like than b-subjects” (Keenan 1976, 109). In other words, some of the properties identified by Keenan as typical of basic subjects, are unlikely to be “passed on” to non-basic subjects in the process of transforming a sentence from basic to derived. Accordingly, I will verify how the core argument introduced by the verbs being analysed behaves in three tests I devised, since they are valid both for basic subjects and for derived subjects, such as the subjects of passive constructions. In effect, when considered from a pragmatic/functional point of view, Lithuanian passive constructions are very similar to transimpersonal constructions, in that they are both linked to a mechanism of backgrounding/defocusing of the Agent. However, the temporal perspective is different. In particular, the passive is a synchronic strategy of voice modulation, by means of which the Agent is demoted from the argument structure and the object is promoted to subject. On the contrary, the constructions analysed in this paper involve objects which take on properties typically associated with subjects seen from a diachronic perspective, as a result of the removal of the Agent. Nonetheless, in both cases we are dealing with derived subjects (d-subjects) rather than basic subjects (b-subjects), even though the perspective is synchronic in the one case (passives) and diachronic in the other (transition to transimpersonal and impersonal constructions).

¹ Following Dixon 1979, I will use A, O and S to denote, respectively, the core terms of the prototypical transitive construction, A (Agent) and O (Patient) and the sole argument of an intransitive predicate (S). In their prototypical encoding, they coincide with the notion of subject (S and A) and object (O), in those languages where these grammatical relations are relevant.

Before analysing the role played by transimpersonal constructions in the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns in Lithuanian, a terminological specification is necessary. In the last few years studies on syntactic typology have focused extensively on studying the alignment of S with the nuclear arguments of a prototypical transitive construction, A(Agent) and O(Patient), where S is the single argument introduced by syntactically monovalent verbs. If S is aligned with A, this is referred to as accusative alignment; in contrast, if S is aligned with O, this is referred to as ergative alignment. However, within these two patterns it is possible to identify variations in alignment, with the result that verbs occurring in intransitive constructions can be divided into two subclasses: one class in which S is aligned with A (S_A), and another in which S is aligned with O (S_O). Scholars have adopted a wide variety of terms to describe this phenomenon: “active-inactive” languages (Sapir 1917), “stative-active” languages (Matthews 1965), “agent-patient” languages (Dahlstrom 1983), “unaccusativity” (Perlmutter 1978), “split-S” (Dixon 1979), and more recently, “semantic alignment” (Donohue, Wichmann 2008). This proliferation of labels has engendered notable confusion.

In the present paper the term “Split Intransitivity” introduced by Merlan (1985) will be adopted, as it implies the presence of a category S, which is relevant from the morphosyntactic point of view and typical of accusative languages like Lithuanian. In particular, to use the terminology introduced by Creissels (2008), I will focus on “overt Split Intransitivity”, i.e. that which is manifested by control of the verbal agreement, case marking and the order of constituents (on condition that the language in question has a rigid order of constituents, which is not the case for Lithuanian, where the opposition SV - VS invokes pragmatic considerations).

The article is structured as follows. In Section 2 I will briefly show that the alignment of Lithuanian, which is predominantly accusative, can justifiably be defined as a syntactic alignment, and I will outline the concepts of Macrorole as well as the Actor-Undergoer-Hierarchy versus the Accessibility-to-Pivot-Hierarchy, which are both fundamental aspects in the theoretical framework of Role and Reference Grammar adopted here. After a short typological excursus on transimpersonal constructions (Section 3), in Section 4 I will investigate the manner of realization of the arguments of some causative verbs and transitive predicates, which show the incipient process of reanalysis

of transimpersonal constructions. Section 5 is devoted to a particular class of *verba sentiendi* which describe physical states, such as “to hurt”, “to itch”, “to sting”. From studying their syntactical behaviour, there appears to be good reason to hypothesize an advancement of the process of reanalysis towards the probable emergence of a Split Intransitivity pattern. The question is approached with caution, since, as will be seen in detail in Section 6, it is conceivable that structural characteristics intrinsic to Lithuanian may impede the emergence of such patterns *stricto sensu*. Old Lithuanian, however, seems to show traces of less stringent restrictions, possibly suggesting more advanced stages of reanalysis. Lastly, Section 7 draws the final conclusions.

2. Lithuanian: a language with nominative-accusative alignment

The theoretical framework of Role and Reference Grammar [RRG] (Foley, Van Valin 1984; Van Valin, LaPolla 1997; Van Valin 2001; 2005) has proven to be a valid model in the description of semantic-syntactic interface phenomena. Among the main features of RRG is the use of a set of thematic roles organized into a hierarchy, in which the highest-ranking roles are Actor and Undergoer. There are two types of semantic relationships between predicates and their arguments: the familiar thematic relations like Agent, Experiencer, Patient, etc., and a second, more general type of semantic role, labelled “semantic macrorole”. In order to avoid a profusion of thematic relations, RRG posits two macroroles, namely “Actor” and “Undergoer”. Roles such as Agent, Experiencer, Instrument, Recipient, Source and Force are subsumed under the Actor macrorole, defined as “the argument of a predicate expressing the participant which performs, effects, instigates or controls the situation denoted by the predicate” (Foley, Van Valin 1984, 29). Roles such as Patient, Theme, Stimulus, Recipient and Location are subsumed under the Undergoer macrorole, i.e. “the argument expressing the participant which does not perform, initiate, or control any situation, but rather is affected by it in some way” (Foley, Van Valin 1984, 29).

According to RRG, the semantic interpretation of the single argument introduced by a verb depends, first and foremost, on the logical structure of the verb or predicating element it occurs with. The close link between macroroles and the arguments that a predicate introduces according to its logical structure is illustrated in the Actor-Undergoer-Hierarchy (AUH):

ACTOR
UNDERGOER

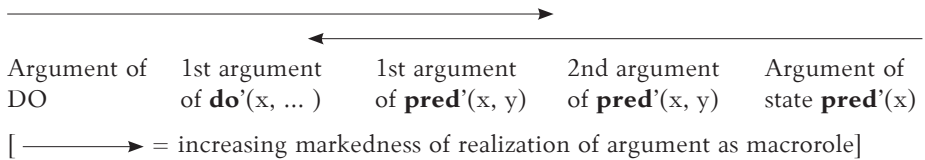


Figure 1. **Actor-Undergoer Hierarchy**

This hierarchy, as we will see, explains numerous syntactic phenomena of Lithuanian and German, whereas Icelandic seems to operate according to a different hierarchy, the Accessibility-to-Pivot-Hierarchy (APH). This latter establishes that: “the highest ranking argument with respect to the Actor end of the Actor-Undergoer-Hierarchy (see Fig. 1), regardless of whether it is a macrorole or not, is the pivot.” (Wiemer 2008, 163). This question will be examined in detail in Section 5.

The semantic distinction between the two macroroles is neutralized in Lithuanian for syntactic purposes. That is to say, the alignment of Lithuanian can justifiably be defined as syntactic inasmuch as the grammatical relations of subject and object have priority over the macroroles typically associated with them. In the following examples (1–6), the noun phrase *Jonas* ‘John’ is always coded in the nominative case, whether it is the Actor of an active transitive verb (1) or of an intransitive verb (2), or whether it is the Undergoer of a transitive verb in the passive voice (4) or of an intransitive verb (3). Sentence (6) shows that in Lithuanian the factors that determine the nominative case marking of the subject noun phrase are of a decidedly syntactic nature rather than semantic: both in (4) and in (5) the noun phrase *Jonas* ‘John’ is the Undergoer, but in (5) it does not control the agreement of the verb because it is an object. Semantics is neutralized and “subordinated” to syntax.

- 1) *Jon-as* *su-valg-ė* *obuol-j.* Actor of transitive V
 John-NOM.SG. PREF.eat-PAST.3² apple-ACC.SG.
 ‘John ate an apple.’

² In Lithuanian the third person ending is formally a pure stem, with a singular, dual and plural function for any tense and mood. According to some scholars this feature is archaic (inherited from an Indo-European stage), and encodes the lack of participation of the third person in the communicative process. For a different hypothesis see Dini 1997 and the bibliography mentioned there.

- 2) *Jon-as* *pa-skambin-o* *Ast-ai.* Actor of intransitive V
 John-NOM.SG. PREF-telephone-PAST.3 Asta-DAT.SG.
 'John telephoned Asta.'
- 3) *Jon-as* *mir-ė.* Undergoer of intransitive V
 John-NOM.SG. die-PAST.3
 'John died.'
- 4) *Jon-as* *buvo* *mylė-tas.* Undergoer of transitive V [passive]
 John-NOM.SG. be-PAST.3 love-PTCP.PST.PASS.NOM.SG.
 'John was loved.'
- 5) *Jon-q* *tu* *mylėj-ai.* Undergoer of transitive V [active]
 John-ACC.SG. you.NOM. love-PAST.2.SG.
 'You loved John.'
- 6) **Jon-q* *tu* *mylė-jo.* Undergoer of transitive V [active]
 John-ACC.SG. you.NOM. love-PAST.3
 **'John you has loved.'

Ergative and accusative languages adopt two different and to some extent mirror image strategies in treating the category S. Ergative languages treat the argument of an intransitive verb (S) similarly to the object of a transitive verb (O), but distinguish them from the agent (A) of a transitive verb. Accusative languages, like Lithuanian, treat the S argument of an intransitive verb like the A argument of a transitive predicate, and distinguish them from the O argument. Nevertheless, in both these language typologies Split Intransitivity phenomena can be observed. In the first case, the single argument of some intransitive verbs is treated similarly to the A argument of transitives (S_A), and in the second, the single argument introduced by other intransitives is treated similarly to the O argument of transitive predicates (S_O).

The factors underlying this split in the treatment of S are of an unequivocally semantic nature. As has been shown extensively in literature (*inter al.* see Van Valin 1990), they are linked to the intrinsic characteristics of the predicate, namely to its *Aktionsart* and to the agentivity of the noun phrase as a syntactic function of S, which are parameters closely linked to each other.

In the framework of RRG this close correlation between macrorole and intrinsic semantic properties of the predicate is formulated in terms of Default Macrorole Assignment Principles, as follows: "If a verb has one argument in its logical structure, it will take one macrorole". As far as the nature of this macrorole is concerned, "if the verb has no activity predicate in its logical structure, the macrorole is Undergoer" (Van Valin 2005, 63).

For all the verbs examined in the present study, the concept of state proves to be relevant. These verbs are either causatives, i.e. verbs that “have a complex structure consisting of a predicate indicating the causing action or event, usually an activity predicate, linked to a predicate indicating the resulting state of affairs by an operator-connective CAUSE” (Van Valin 2005, 42), or telic verbs³, which by definition incorporate the concept of state, or atelic stative predicates. Thus the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns is correlated to the *Aktionsart* properties of the predicate, and in particular to the concept of state, even though the latter is merely an underlying concept.

3. Transimpersonal constructions: a definition

As underlined in the Introduction, recent studies have demonstrated the importance of the role of transimpersonal constructions in the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns in languages with predominantly accusative and ergative coding (see numerous contributions to Wichmann, Donohue 2008 and to Malchukov, Siewierska 2011). Malchukov describes this process of reanalysis with examples taken from the native languages of America and New Guinea, which confirm the tendency for experiencer objects to be reanalyzed as non canonical subjects. In this process, which in many cases is still on-going, transimpersonal constructions are at an intermediate stage. In Amele (Madang family, Papua New Guinea), for example, in (7) the Experiencer is syntactically encoded as an object, since it is cross-referenced to the auxiliary verb by a patientive verbal prefix, while the subject agreement is in the third person singular.

7) <i>ija</i>	<i>wen</i>	<i>te-na.</i>	Malchukov 2008, 88
1SG	hunger	1SG.P-3SG.A.PRS	
‘I am hungry.’			

Although the structure clearly preserves a transitive *facies*, the object shows some syntactic peculiarities typical of the subject, such as sentence-initial position, the ability to control switch-reference or reflexivization.

In some cases the distinction between patientive intransitives and transimpersonal experiencer verbs is very clear; in Slave (Athabaskan, Canada), for instance, in transimpersonal constructions it is possible to find a specific agreement marker *-tse-* that has the function of encoding the indefinite subject. The verb retains its transitive morphology:

³ The verbs in the second group of Section 4 all have prefixes: the prefix endows the predicate with telic *Aktionsart*.

8) *K'ina-ts'e-reyo*⁴.

Malchukov 2008, 78

'She/he is chased.' (literally: 'Someone chased him/her.')

In other cases the distinction is less clear-cut, as in West Greenlandic or other varieties of Eskimo, where the opposition between the transimpersonal and intransitive construction works on a functional level, and the intransitive inflection gives no information concerning the degree of control or spontaneity of the event. In contrast, the transitive-transimpersonal inflection is used to denote events that occur spontaneously, over which the subject exerts no control.

This type of opposition is strongly reminiscent of the agent/patient pattern identified by Mithun (2008) in Yuki (isolate, California). This language has two sets of pronouns, which can occur with the function either of subject or of object. Therefore they are not correlated with different syntactic functions but rather with different semantic roles: the first set of pronouns typically denotes Agents, in other words participants who control the action described by the verb. The second set instead is correlated with Patients, i.e. participants that typically undergo the action described by the predicate in a significant way.

Mithun's study devoted to the distribution of systems with agentive-patientive coding in some languages spoken in North America showed that such systems may have been induced within a mainly accusative coding language by contact with languages in which agentive-patientive patterns were predominant. This is the case, for instance, in Tlingit, the only language presenting an agentive-patientive system within the Tlingit-Eyak-Athabaskan family. The introduction of the agentive-patientive system arose due to prolonged contact with Haida, which is characterized by agentive-patientive coding. The mechanism of reanalysis came about through transimpersonal constructions: an accusative system was reanalysed as an agentive-patientive system starting from transitive constructions in which third-person subjects were omitted. Such constructions were reinterpreted as intransitives and the erstwhile objects were reanalysed as "grammatical patients".

The reanalysis of transimpersonal constructions into patient-subject intransitives is likely to have followed this kind of path (Mithun 2008, 309):

⁴ The source does not provide glosses.

(SUBJECT)	OBJECT	TRANSITIVE VERB	'It scared me.'
(it)	me	scared	
	PATIENT	INTRANSITIVE VERB	'I am scared.'

With this theoretical framework in mind, I will now examine cases in which the transimpersonal construction seems to play an important role in the on-going process leading towards the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns in Lithuanian.

4. Transimpersonal constructions in Lithuanian: a first stage of reanalysis of experiencer object verbs

Lithuanian has a nucleus of verbs, all characterised by the causative suffix *-inti* (or *-yti*), *troškinti* 'to be thirsty', *dusinti* 'to stifle', *pykinti* 'to feel sick', *purtyti* or *purtinti* 'to be disgusted', *laužyti* 'to break' (intr.), *kratyti* 'to shake', which show various different syntactic patterns.

Consider for instance the verb *troškinti* 'to be thirsty': it can occur in a canonical transitive construction in which the Stimulus is coded in the nominative and the Experiencer in the accusative:

9) <i>Žuv-is</i>	<i>mane</i>	<i>trošk-in-a.</i>
fish-NOM.SG.	me.ACC.	be thirsty-CAUS-PRS.3
'Fish makes me thirsty.'		

The same verb also occurs in an impersonal construction where only the Experiencer in the accusative case is expressed, without any mention of the cause that has induced the state of thirst. Through removal of the Agent from the argument structure of the verb, the speaker invites a visualisation of the event as if it occurred spontaneously. The single core argument licensed by the predicate denotes the person who is affected by the state in question without being able to exercise any control over it.

10) [Ø]	<i>mane</i>	<i>trošk-in-a.</i>
	me.ACC.	be thirsty-CAUS-PRS.3
'I am thirsty.'		

Finally, the verb *troškinti* occurs in a third construction in which the single core argument, the Experiencer, receives the accusative case marking, while the origin of the physical state described, the Stimulus, is expressed with a prepositional phrase introduced by *nuo* or *dėl* 'because of':

11) <i>Mane</i>	<i>trošk-in-a</i>	<i>nuo</i>	<i>žuv-ies.</i>
me.ACC.	be thirsty-CAUS-PRS.3	PREP	fish-GEN.SG.
'I am thirsty because of the fish.'			

It can be hypothesised that the constructions in (10) and (11), which are fully impersonal, may derive from reanalysis of a construction with a null, non referential subject, which has an arbitrary reading: “[An unspecified cause] makes me thirsty”. The fact that such a cause can be expressed not only by the nominative in a canonical transitive construction (9), but also by means of a prepositional phrase (11) signals that (10) is no longer considered as an elliptical variant of (9). However, it is considered as a distinct construction, in which a transitive basic verb “behaves” like an intransitive verb which introduces a single argument with accusative case marking. The transitive-transimpersonal origin of such patientive intransitives can be inferred from the fact that the verb maintains the causative suffix and verb agreement with the Agent-subject, even though the latter has been removed from the argument structure. The speaker can express the external Agent by means of a prepositional phrase (*nuo* or *dël* + genitive), but this prevents the introduction of a noun phrase in the nominative case. Starting from the pragmatic function of backgrounding/defocusing of the Agent, the foundations are laid for the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns.

Such constructions also have interesting parallels in Russian, as highlighted by Creissels (2007, 41):

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|---------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 12) | <i>Ja</i> | <i>trjas-u</i> | | <i>kovër.</i> |
| | me.NOM. | shake-PRS.IND.1.SG. | | carpet.ACC.SG. |
| | ‘I am shaking the carpet.’ | | | |
| 13) | <i>Menja</i> | <i>trjas-ët</i> | | <i>lixoradk-a.</i> |
| | me.ACC. | shake-PRS.IND.3.SG. | | fever-NOM.SG. |
| | ‘Fever shakes me.’ | | | |
| 14) | <i>Menja</i> | <i>trjas-ët</i> | <i>ot</i> | <i>lixoradk-i.</i> |
| | me.ACC. | shake-PRS.IND.3.SG. | PREP | fever.GEN.SG. |
| | ‘I am shaking with fever.’ (literally: ‘It shakes me from fever.’) | | | |
| 15) | <i>V</i> | <i>poezd-e</i> | | <i>trjas-ët.</i> |
| | PREP | train-LOC.SG. | | shake-PRS.IND.3.SG. |
| | ‘One gets shaken in the train.’ (literally: ‘It shakes in the train.’) | | | |

In addition, it is worth noting that the semantics of Russian verbs closely resembles that of the equivalent Lithuanian verbs. As Creissels (2007; 2008) has underlined a number of times, not all typologists concur in identifying such constructions as instances of Split Intransitivity: in fact, as we will see in Section 6, the noun phrase in the accusative case does not satisfy the

syntactic tests on subjecthood as canonical subjects instead do. This has led many scholars to conclude that although the process of reanalysis has been set in motion, it has not led to the emergence of a genuine agentive-patientive system: “This stage [i.e. Split Intransitivity, *S.P.*] arguably has not been reached yet in Russian, but is attested to in some other languages, such as Icelandic (also discussed in Creissels 2007), as well as in the split-intransitive languages mentioned above” (Malchukov, Ogawa 2011, 49).

In Lithuanian, like Russian, the noun phrase introduced by the verbs listed at the beginning of this Section shows neither the coding properties typically associated with the subject (it is not encoded in the nominative and does not control verb agreement) nor the behaviour properties. Rather, the noun phrase in question seems to behave like a typical object. Thus it would appear that with this class of verbs the process of reanalysis is at an initial stage, and that O has not yet been fully promoted to S_o ; but we will return to this tricky issue in Section 6.

Another yet unfinished process of reanalysis towards Split Intransitivity is also observable in a different group of transitive verbs which do not show an overt marker of transitivity, unlike the causative verbs analyzed above. These are verb lacking all forms but the third person and denoting cutaneous eruptions (*išberti* ‘to erupt’, *nukelti* ‘to appear’, *išmušti* ‘to become covered’, etc.); the person who is affected by the eruption (Experiencer), or the concrete body part involved (Theme), are encoded by the accusative.

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|------|
| 16) | <i>Man</i> | <i>nu-kël-ë</i> | <i>spuog-ais</i> | <i>liežuv-į.</i> | DLKG | |
| | me.DAT. | PREF-appear-PAST.3 | spots-INS.PL. | tongue-ACC.SG. | | |
| | ‘Spots have appeared on my tongue.’ | | | | | |
| 17) | <i>Mane</i> | <i>kartais</i> | <i>iš-muš-a</i> | <i>raudon-omis</i> | <i>dëm-ëmis.</i> | DLKG |
| | me.ACC. | ADV | PREF-get-PRS.3 | red-INS.PL. | spot-INS.PL. | |
| | ‘I sometimes get red marks on the body.’ | | | | | |
| 18) | <i>Vaik-q</i> | <i>iš-bër-ë</i> | <i>raudon-ais</i> | <i>spuogel-iais.</i> | DLKG | |
| | child-ACC.SG. | PREF-erupt-PAST.3 | red-INS.PL. | spot-INS.PL. | | |
| | ‘The child’s body erupted in red spots.’ | | | | | |

In a similar way to the previous group, these transitive predicates can occur in an impersonal construction in which the Agent/Cause is removed from the argument structure but can be reintroduced by means of a prepositional phrase. By using such predicates, informants award preference to the

expression of the cause by means of a prepositional phrase, which occupies the initial position, typical of the subject-Agent in an unmarked order of the constituents of the sentence:

- 19) *Nuo karšč-io vaik-q iš-bēr-ė spuogel-iais.*
 PREP heat-GEN.SG. child-ACC.SG. PREF-erupt-PAST.3 spot-INS.PL.
 ‘Due to the heat, the child became covered with small spots.’
- 20) *Nuo jaudul-io mane išmuš-ė dėm-ėmis.*
 PREP emotion-GEN.SG. me.ACC. PREF-get-PAST.3 spot-INS.PL.
 ‘I became covered with spots as a result of emotion.’

Thus it seems valid to infer that the stage of reanalysis is slightly more advanced here, as the canonical transitive construction that requires expression of the Stimulus in the nominative case is in many cases felt to be marked, and is not accepted by all informants:

- 21) ***Jaudul-ys mane išmuš-ė dėm-ėmis.*
 Emotion-NOM.SG. me.ACC. PREF-get-PAST.3 spot-INS.PL.
 ‘Emotion covered me with spots.’

It is realistic to envisage a further step in the process of reanalysis taking place as a consequence of the disappearance of the canonical transitive construction: if the verb can no longer occur in a canonical transitive construction, in which A is assigned the semantic role of Stimulus and O the semantic role of Experiencer, then the original diachronic link between the transitive-transimpersonal and the intransitive construction will fade. The intransitive construction, perceived by the speaker as “abnormal”, could then be reanalysed into a patientive intransitive, according to this path:

*Stimulus (A)	Verb	Experiencer (O)
[Ø A]	Verb	Experiencer (O)

Some verbs have advanced further along this path towards the emergence of Split Intransitivity patterns. They will be analyzed in the following Section.

5. Transimpersonal constructions and psychological verbs: a more advanced stage of reanalysis

There is a small class of verbs denoting physical states, such as “to hurt”, “to itch”, “to sting”, that occur in an impersonal construction with an accusative noun phrase representing the aching body part: *skaudėti* ‘to feel pain’, *sopėti* ‘to ache’; *diegti* ‘to feel a strong and sudden pain’; *gelti* ‘to ache

a lot'; *mausti* 'to ache a bit incessantly'; *peršėti* 'to feel a prickly pain (on the skin, wound)'; *niežėti* (or *knitėti*) 'to itch (about the skin)'. Let us take a look at the following examples⁵:

- 22) *Skaūd-a* *kojas* *iki* *ašar-ų.* LKŽ
ache-PRS.3 leg-ACC.PL. PREP tear-GEN.PL.
'The pain in my legs almost makes me cry.'
- 23) *Nuo* *t-ų* *dūm-ų* *galv-q* *sop-a.* LKŽ
PREP that-GEN.PL smoke-GEN.PL. head-ACC.SG. ache-PRS.3
'I have got a headache because of that smoke.'
- 24) *Ar* *tau* *žand-q* *labai* *maudž-ia?* LKŽ
Q you.DAT. jaw-ACC.SG. ADV hurt-PRS.3
'Does your jaw hurt a lot?'
- 25) *Šird-į* *man* *dieg-ia.* LKŽ
heart-ACC.SG. me.DAT. have a twinge-PRS.3
'I have a twinge in my heart.'
- 26) *Sumuš-t-us* *kaul-us* *moter-iai* *gel-ia*
beat-PTCP.PAST.PASS-ACC.PL. bones-ACC.PL. woman-DAT.SG. bit-PRS.3
iki *šiol.* LKŽ
PREP ADV
'The woman's bones still hurt after the beating.'
- 27) *Daugel-iui* *j-ų* *perš-i* *gerkl-ę.* LKŽ
many-DAT.SG. they-GEN.PL. itch-PRS.3 throat-ACC.SG.
'Most of them have a sore throat.'
- 28) *Nuolat* *niežt-i* *galv-os* *od-q.* LKŽ
ADV itch-PRS.3 head-GEN.SG. skin-ACC.SG.
'The scalp constantly itches.'

⁵ The examples illustrated were drawn from the *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* (20 volumes), published between 1941 and 2002, containing about a million and a half entries and now available at www.lkz.lt as well as from a Lithuanian Corpus elaborated by the Centre of Computational Linguistics of the Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas. This Corpus was prepared in order to give a broad description of standard Lithuanian and contains 100 million entries. Its principal source is the material drawn from the Lithuanian press since 1990 (the Independence period). This balanced Corpus is made up primarily of texts from the general press (regional and national newspapers) and the specialised press (specialised newspapers and journals), somewhat less of pieces drawn from fiction, scientific and popular literature or official documents.

In a previous article (Piccini 2008) I suggested that such constructions could be analysed as patterns of non-nominative alignment, since these predicates, in their impersonal monoactantial use, introduce a single argument S which is encoded in the same way as the patient of prototypical action verbs (O). S is aligned with O, and therefore is encoded in the accusative. The core argument characterised by an inactive semantic role (S_o) is morphologically aligned with the inactive argument of transitive predicates (O), sharing with it the semantic macrorole of Undergoer. According to my previous interpretation, the “logical” subject, i.e. the single core argument introduced by an intransitive predicate, is encoded like the prototypical object of a transitive verb (O). This could be considered an instance of the so-called “extended accusative” (Moravcsik 1978): the accusative, which typically marks the object of a transitive predicate (O), is extended also to encode the subject of some intransitive verbs mainly denoting mental and bodily processes, in other words involuntary actions over which the subject has no control.

As we will see in Section 6, in actual fact the situation appears somewhat more complex, as the single core argument of these predicates not only fails to receive a canonical formal marking, but it does not even satisfy tests on subjecthood.

On the other hand, the noun phrase coded in the dative in (24)–(27) can be considered an argument licensed by the verb as well as an external possessor, i.e. the possessor of the body part involved in the affliction described by the verb. This external possessor, also known as *dativus sympathicus*, typically occurs with verbs that denote physical or mental states and is equivalent to a possessive adjective, as illustrated in the following sentences:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 29) | <i>Nu-kirt-o</i>
PREF-cut off-PAST.3 | <i>jam</i>
he.DAT. | <i>rank-a.</i>
hand-ACC.SG. | Ambrazas 2006, 253 |
| | ‘He cut off his hand.’ | | | |
| 30) | <i>Nu-svir-o</i>
PREF-spin-PAST.3 | <i>tėv-ui</i>
father-DAT.SG. | <i>galv-a.</i>
head-NOM.SG. | Ambrazas 2006, 253 |
| | ‘His father’s head spun.’ | | | |

From a logical point of view the possessor is also the Experiencer of the state of pain: in the inalienable relation between the body part and the person

it belongs to, it is natural to think that a process, which directly involves a part, causes concomitant effects on the whole person (Levine 1986)⁶.

The patterns analyzed in this Section differ from those studied in Section 4 with causative verbs, as the single argument introduced by these verbs is not an Experiencer from the semantic point of view, but rather a Theme. The Experiencer/possessor, when required, is in the dative. However, it is worth noting that in some dialect variants of modern Lithuanian several of these psychological verbs can occur in an impersonal construction, in which the experiencer role is assigned to an accusative noun phrase representing the person affected by the ache:

- 31) *Manę* [sic] *vis-q* *sop-a.* LKŽ
 me.ACC. all-ACC.SG. ache-PRS.3
 ‘I am aching all over.’
- 32) *Net* *mane* *skaud-a,* *kad* *tu* *serg-i.* LKŽ
 CONJ me.ACC. ache-PRS.3 CONJ you.NOM. be ill-PRS.2.SG
 ‘I am sorry that you are not well.’

The difference between *man skauda galvą* ‘I have got a headache’ and *mane skauda* ‘I am aching’ is that in the first case, the process crucially affects a body part (Theme/Patient): the structure is part-centered, while in the second case the structure is whole-centered, i.e. the whole person is affected (Experiencer/External Possessor).

In the Lithuanian dialects of the north-western area, such impersonal structures with the experiential predicates have personal equivalents, wherein the body part affected by the ache is encoded not with the accusative marker, but, rather, with the nominative, as would be expected in a language characterised by nominative-accusative syntax. The single argument introduced by the intransitive verb receives nominative case marking, independently of the fact that on the semantic level it is an Undergoer:

⁶ In standard modern Lithuanian, as with ancient texts, the dative in such constructions encodes external possession and therefore combines only with the elements typical of inalienable possession: body parts, clothes, objects closely connected to the person in question (see *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos gramatika* 1996, 611): “Savybinis naudininkas įtraukiamas į beasmenius sakinius tais pačiais atvejais, kaip ir į asmeninius: kai reikia nusakyti dalies ir visumos santykį. Asmuo reiškiamas naudininku, jo dalis ar drabužis – galininku” [The possessive dative occurs in the impersonal constructions in the same cases as personal constructions: when it does occur, it expresses the relation between a part and the whole. The person is encoded by the dative, the person’s body part or clothes are in the accusative case].

- 34) *Sop-a* *man* *vis-i* *sqnari-ai.* LKŽ
ache-PRS.3 me.DAT. all-NOM.PL. joint-NOM.PL.
‘All my joints ache.’
- 35) *Nejaugi* *dabar* *jiems* *niežt-i* *nag-ai?* Corpus
Q ADV they.DAT itch-PRS.3 nails-NOM.PL.
‘Do their nails really itch?’
- 36) *Skaud-a* *vis-as* *kūn-as.* LKŽ
itch-PRS.3 all-NOM.SG. body-NOM.SG.
‘All the body itches.’
- 37) *Tik* *gel-ia* *didel-ė* *žaid-a* *šird-yje.* Corpus
ADV sting-PRS.3 big-NOM.SG. wound-NOM.SG. heart-LOC.SG.
‘Only a big wound hurts the heart.’

In the view of Seržant 2013 the two syntactic structures, i.e. the personal (Nom Verb) and the impersonal (Acc Verb) structure, are arguably derived from two different conceptualizations: one defined by the author as “stative” and the other as “causal”. The stative conceptualization is held to be possible only with verbs such as *skaudėti* ‘to feel pain’ and *sopėti* ‘to ache’. Verbs of this type do not allow – and presumably never allowed – expression of the Stimulus, i.e. of the source of the pain, as a core argument: it does not “saturate” the valency of the verb, but can be expressed only through a prepositional phrase. Instead, the body part itself is construed as the Stimulus and is therefore encoded in the nominative, as it triggers the state affecting the Experiencer. Accordingly, it is maintained in the above-cited work that a construction such as (38) is always ungrammatical:

- 38) **Skausm-as* *man* *skaud-a* *galv-q/galv-a.* Seržant 2013, 198
pain-NOM.SG. me.DAT. ache-PRS.3 head-ACC.SG/NOM.SG.
Intended meaning: ‘Pain hurts me the head.’

In the causal conceptualization, the verb has a trivalent argument structure: the Stimulus is expressed in the nominative case, the Experiencer in the dative and the body part affected by the pain in the accusative:

- 39) *Šalt-is* *gel-ia* *man* *koj-as.* Seržant 2013, 200
cold-NOM.SG. stabbing pain-PRS.3 me.DAT. leg-ACC.PL.
‘I have a stabbing pain in [my] feet because of the cold.’⁷

⁷ In Google it is possible to find personal constructions with *gelti* ‘to ache a lot’ as well. For example: *Skausmas plėšė man krūtinę.* ‘[A strong] pain hurted me the chest.’

This would also iconically represent the causal structure characteristic of psychological verbs, which is defined by Croft (1993) in terms of the “causal chain”: a Stimulus causes a state of pain on a part of the body, thereby indirectly provoking effects on the Experiencer, in this case the “Maleficiary” of the pain event. Seržant underlines that a number of verbs are constructed according to this model, such as *gelti* ‘to ache a lot’, *mausti* ‘to ache a bit incessantly’, *plěšti* ‘to tear’, although some of them, like *plěšti*, allow only the lexeme *skausmas* ‘pain’ to occur as the subject, which has the semantic role of Stimulus. In contrast, *gelti* allows a broader lexical class to occupy the position of Stimulus.

In Seržant’s interpretation, it is likely that some verbs have tended to reduce their argument structure over time and to shift from being trivalent to bivalent. As a consequence, the two morphosyntactic models, i.e. the stative and the causal, eventually merged. That is to say, once the “pain verbs” no longer admitted expression of the Stimulus as the nuclear argument, they lost their trivalent status and became bivalent: thus the stative and the causal pattern became interchangeable, and the body part involved in the state of pain could sometimes be encoded in the nominative, sometimes in the accusative. This was probably followed by a subsequent stage where, in order to avoid the redundancy inherent in the morphosyntactic variation, the frame with the accusative became widespread in the standard language, whereas the one with the nominative underwent a “regression” to the status of dialectal variant.

In my view, some objections to Seržant’s thesis can be put forward. The spread and growing predominance of the more marked form (i.e. the form with the sole argument of the verb encoded in the accusative case) in the standard language is in contrast with what Seržant himself asserted (2013, 204): “Lack of nominative case has been observed to be generally dispreferred”, to the point that “in Malchukov (2005, 99) such a case frame is not even listed as a possible one”.

Furthermore, there seem to be indications that verbs like *skaudėti* and *sopėti* did also go through a stage of trivalent argument structure. According to my interpretation, all the verbs under analysis in this Section (*skaudėti*, *sopėti*, *diegti*, *gelti*, *mausti*, *peršėti* etc.) could originally participate in a canonical transitive construction; it was only at a later stage that the stative reading become the only one countenanced for a few of these verbs (*skaudėti* and *sopėti*). One indication that this hypothesis could be well founded is the

fact that LKŽ attests to a causative use of *skaudėti*, comparable to that which *gelti* and *mausti* still preserve today:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----|
| 40) | <i>Aš</i> | <i>išsilenk-č-iau</i> | <i>šiaur-aus</i> | <i>vėjelio</i> | |
| | me.NOM. | avoid-COND-1SG. | icy-GEN.SG. | breeze-GEN.SG. | |
| | <i>ir</i> | <i>skaud-anči-o [= skaudžiančio?]</i> | | <i>lietel-io</i> | LKŽ |
| | CONJ | provoke pain-PRT.PRS.ACT-GEN.SG. | | drizzle-GEN.SG. | |
- ‘I would avoid the icy breeze and the painful drizzle.’

In this sentence *skaudėti* is used as a synonym of the causative *skaudinti*, in the meaning of *sukelti skausmą* ‘to provoke pain’⁸.

A further point deserves to be taken into consideration. Let us examine the following examples:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 41) | <i>Man</i> | <i>skaud-a</i> | <i>galv-a.</i> |
| | me.DAT. | hurt-PRS.3 | head-NOM.SG. |
| | | ‘I have got a headache.’ | |
| 42) | <i>Man</i> | <i>skaud-a</i> | <i>galvą.</i> |
| | me.DAT. | hurt-PRS.3 | head-ACC.SG. |
| | | ‘I have got a headache.’ | |

According to Seržant, (41) is likely to be older than (42): “The NOM case-marking [...] reveals itself to be the historically original case marking with these verbs, as comparison with Old Lithuanian (most prominently texts composed by Daukša) and Latvian shows, since neither of them allows ACC here” (2013, 191–192). Construction (42), regarded as more recent, in Seržant’s view testifies to a process whereby the previous subject in the nominative acquired properties typical of the object and thus of accusative case marking.

However, a not irrelevant point is that the accusative marking of the noun phrase encoding the body part affected by the ache is already attested in the first Lithuanian grammar by Kurschat⁹. Furthermore, as early as in Bretkūnas

⁸ It should be mentioned here that a patientive intransitive derived from a transimpersonal need not necessarily be labile and thus show traces of a transitive use. As Malchukov (2008) has demonstrated, the transitive use may have been lost over time or may have been induced by an analogy with semantically close verbs.

⁹ See Kurschat 1876, 376: “Das Sprachgefühl sträubt sich dagegen, diese Accusative also blosser Accusative der Beziehung anzusehen”. However, the constructions in question are not mentioned in any of the following: *Pirmoji Lietuvių kalbos gramatika* (1653), *Sapūno ir Šulco Gramatika – Compendium Grammaticae Lithuanicae* (1673),

(Prov.23₃₅) the verb *skausti* could license an argument, i.e. the Experiencer, marked by the accusative case.¹⁰

- 43) *Skaus-t mane.* Specht 1931, 50
ache-PRS.3 me.SG.
'I am aching.'

A counterargument could be that in (43) the verb introduces an Experiencer and not a Theme in the accusative case. Despite this difference, it is nevertheless significant that even in early literature the verb could license an argument in the accusative case and not only in the nominative. The two constructions (41) and (42) probably date from the same period¹¹, and should

Anoniminė 1737 m. Gramatika Universitatis linguarum Lituaniae (1737), Čiulda 1854–1855, or Schleicher 1856–1857. In Senn 1966 and in Kurschat 1876 the accusative that denotes the body part involved in the process described by the verb is interpreted as an accusative of relation. A similar position is espoused by Balkevičius (1998) and Ambrazas (2006).

¹⁰ Parallels – albeit not completely equivalent from a lexical point of view – can be found in other Indo-European languages (see Piccini 2008, 449–450).

¹¹ The data seems to show that the two constructions were contemporaneous. However, if considered from a diachronic-temporal perspective, it would seem more likely that the personal construction arose at a later stage than the impersonal. Thus it has been widely demonstrated that the Indo-European languages have a tendency to replace impersonal constructions with personal constructions (See Franz-Montag 1983; Bauer 2000). An example from German illustrates this idea. It is thought that the functional pressure that tends to promote the animate Experiencer towards the status of subject, which is more canonical for this role, led to the shift from “*Mich hungert*” (lit. ‘It me hungers’) to “*Ich hungere*” (‘I am hungry’). An analogous path of reanalysis is also attested with regard to *sopėti*, for which LKŽ cites the form: “*Kas tau sópa? – Aš visas sópu*” (‘What is it that hurts? – I am hurting all over’). However, this form is said to be restricted to an areal, dialectal use. The direct transition from an impersonal to a personal construction in German and in Lithuanian is a sort of leap, which does not involve gradual acquisition of subject status by the noun phrase, starting from syntactic properties and thence proceeding to the morphological properties. In Malchukovian terms, what one has in German and Lithuanian is a “covert reanalysis of experiencer objects”.

In general, Lithuanian personal constructions in which the Experiencer (or Theme) fulfills the grammatical function of subject are exclusively dialectal forms. This sociolinguistic feature was also observed by See Franz-Montag for German, where impersonal constructions tend to be preserved in elevated style, for instance in writing, and to be the prerogative of a cultured upper class. Young people, on the other hand, appear to have almost completely eliminated impersonal constructions in informal style (See Franz-Montag 1984, 541).

in my view be reconsidered as representing a different visualization of the event, in connection with an ancient lability of *skaudėti* and *sopėti*. More specifically, the personal construction (41), which is restricted to dialect areas, is closely linked to a stative value of the predicate, so that the single argument licensed by an intransitive verb receives nominative case marking.

In contrast, (42) is correlated with an original transitive-causative valence of the predicate, which therefore must have been labile at a more archaic stage. For *skaudėti* and *sopėti*, a process towards Split Intransitivity can be reconstructed according to the following stages:

1) At the first stage of the process the two verbs may have displayed lability and could therefore occur in a canonical intransitive construction, with stative value, or they may have featured a bivalent argument structure, in which A, the Stimulus, was encoded in the nominative and O, the Experiencer or the body part affected by pain, in the accusative.

- 44) **Karštis* *man* *skaud-a* *galvą*.
 heat-NOM.SG. me.DAT. hurt-PRS.3 head-ACC.SG.
 ‘The heat gives me a headache.’

This construction may then have been accompanied at a later stage by another syntactic pattern in which the cause is expressed by a prepositional phrase:

- 45) *Nuo* *karšč-io* *man* *skaud-a* *galv-ą*.
 PREP heat-GEN.SG. me.DAT hurt-PRS.3 head-ACC.SG.
 ‘I have got a headache because of the heat.’

This prevents the reintroduction of a noun phrase with nominative case marking and transforms the construction from transitive to impersonal, analogously to the situation observed nowadays with the verbs analysed in Section 4. Even though for *sopėti* this stage can merely be hypothesised and for *skaudėti* only one example is given in LKŽ, the stage is still attested today for verbs such as *mausti* and *gelti*.

2) At a subsequent stage, sentence (44) is likely to have become obsolete and finally ungrammatical and (45) was thus reinterpreted as a special construction in which the single argument introduced by the verb receives accusative case marking. Thus a transimpersonal construction that does not clash with the predominantly accusative system gives way to an intransitive impersonal construction. It is no longer an elliptical variant of the personal construction.

Consequently it should come as no surprise to observe that only with *skaudėti* and *sopėti* has the process of reanalysis advanced to the point in

which the transitive-transimpersonal construction is no longer allowed. From a morphological point of view they are characterised by the suffix *-è-*, which mainly conveys stative semantics, probably inherited, as it presents parallels in other Indo-European languages (Latin *habēre* ‘to have’, *tacēre* ‘not to tell’; Old High German *habēn* ‘to have’ *bibēn* ‘to tremble’ etc.). As Mithun (2008) and Malchukov (2008) have demonstrated, the lack of a clear marker of transitivity is one of the factors that facilitates the process of reanalysis.

It can therefore be inferred that the construction underwent a transformation from a transitive to a transimpersonal form and thence to an impersonal construction, in which the Agent removed from the argument structure of the verb can be introduced only by means of a prepositional phrase. Thus the original transitive construction would seem to have been fully assimilated to an intransitive construction.

At this juncture two questions naturally arise. Firstly, whether O has been promoted to S_o . In addition, whether the reanalysis has led to the emergence of a genuine Split Intransitive pattern. These points will be addressed in the next Section.

6. The syntactic status of the object experiencer: has O been promoted to S_o ?

During the process of reanalysis of transitive object experiencer verbs into patientive intransitives, the Experiencer, marked as the object, acquires first of all the properties closely correlated with topicality, such as position, then the behavioral properties, and only at a later stage assumes the morphological properties typically associated with the subject (see *inter al.* Keenan 1976; Cole et al. 1980; Givón 1997).

The example from Amele, cited in Section 3, reproduced below as (46), offers a clear demonstration of this phenomenon. In the sentence

- | | | | |
|----------------|------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 46) <i>ija</i> | <i>wen</i> | <i>te.na.</i> | Malchukov 2008, 88 |
| 1SG. | Hunger | 1SG.P-3SG.A.PRS. | |
| ‘I am hungry.’ | | | |

the structure is clearly transitive from a formal point of view, because the verb shows agreement with a default third-person singular subject and the Experiencer is cross-referenced as an object on the auxiliary of the verb. On the other hand, from a syntactic point of view, the experiencer object shows certain syntactic peculiarities typical of the subject, such as sentence-initial position, the ability to control switch-reference or reflexivization.

As regards Lithuanian, the subject-status of these experiential arguments still remains problematic when viewed from a syntactic standpoint. In this language, as in many other languages, the Experiencer and/or the Theme does not respond positively to tests on subjecthood.

It should be underlined here that while the criteria devised by Keenan (1976) are designed to test the properties of basic subjects, this article is devoted to so-called non canonical or quirky subjects, which derive from original O. That is to say, these are subjects derived from objects when seen from a diachronic perspective, and they may therefore prove to be less subject-like than canonical subjects. Accordingly, I have devised the following three tests, which, as stated in the Introduction, may also be applied to derived subjects in Lithuanian (for instance, those of passive constructions).

1- In the constructions analysed above, it is not possible to use the agreeing converb (traditionally called *pusdalyvis* ‘half-participle’) with the suffix *-dam-*, which is controlled by the subject and thus has only nominative forms (see DLKG, 361). In these constructions only the non-agreeing participle (traditionally called *padalyvis* ‘gerund’) in *-ant*, which describes an action performed by a subject distinct from the subject of the main clause, can be used (cf. (47) vs. (48)):

- 47) **Valgy-dam-as* *žuv-į* *staiga* *mane* *iš-bėr-ė*
eat-CNV-NOM.SG. fish-ACC.SG. ADV me.ACC. PREF-erupt-PAST.3
dėm-ėmis.
spot-INS.PL.
Intended meaning: ‘While I was eating the fish, I immediately became covered in spots.’
- 48) *Bevalg-ant* *žuv-į* *staiga* *mane* *iš-bėrė*
eat-PRS.PART. fish-ACC.SG. ADV me.ACC. PREF-erupt-PAST.3
dėm-ėmis.
spot-INS.PL.
‘While I was eating the fish, I immediately became covered in spots.’

2- Similarly, the test with the reflexive possessive adjective *savo* also fails¹². In Lithuanian, when the possessor is coreferential with the subject of

¹² With regard to the test based on the reflexive adjective *savo*, which is coreferential with the subject of the sentence, it is worth noting that Wiemer (2006, 287) quotes the following sentence:

“*Toliau reikšmės skaidomos ir pateikiamos savo nuožiūra, todėl jų išskyrimas ir išdėstymas dėl difuziškumo gali būti ginčytinas*”. (‘Furthermore the meanings are differentiated

the sentence, the indeclinable reflexive pronoun is used for all persons of the singular and the plural. Consequently:

- 49) *Mano* *brol-is* *ger-as*.
 POSS.1.SG. brother-NOM.SG. good-NOM.SG.
 ‘My brother is a good guy.’

but:

- 50) *Aš* *gir-iu* *savo* *broļi*.
 me.NOM. praise-PRS.1.SG. POSS.REFL. brother-ACC.SG.
 ‘I praise my brother.’
- 51) **Aš* *gir-iu* *mano* *broļ-i*.
 me.NOM. praise-PRS.1.SG. POSS.1.SG. brother-ACC.SG.
 ‘I praise my brother.’

In these constructions, if the noun phrase that fulfills the semantic role of Experiencer is also the possessor, the use of *savo* is not allowed:

- 52) **Vis-q* *savo* *gyvenim-q*
 all-ACC.SG. POSS.REFL. life-ACC.SG.
mane *iš-muš-ė* *spuog-ais*.
 me.ACC. PREF-get-PAST.3 spot INS.PL.
 ‘I have become covered in spots all my life.’

In contrast, *savo* is possible if the construction is in the passive, because O is promoted to S and controls reflexivization:

- 53) *Vis-q* *savo* *gyvenim-q* *jis* *pra-leid-o*
 all-SG.ACC. POSS.REFL. life-ACC.SG. he.NOM.SG. PREF-spend-PAST.3
iš-ber-t-as *spuog-ais*.
 PREF-get-PRT.PAST.PASS-NOM.SG. spot-INS.PL.
 ‘He spent the whole of his life covered in (literally: ‘full of’) spots.’

3- As Keenan has shown, basic subjects are able to control coreferential deletions: “The noun phrases which can be coreferentially deleted across coordinate conjunctions include b-subjects” (Keenan 1976, 317). However, this does not occur in the constructions being examined:

and arranged at one’s own discretion; therefore, due to diffusiveness, their differentiation and arrangement may be disputable”).

As can be seen in the passive constructions control of the reflexive pronoun can be exercised by the Actor and not by the subject: semantics “wins out” over syntax. However, these are marked situations, which nevertheless demonstrate that derived subjects are less subject-like than the subject of basic sentences.

- 54) *Vakar labai svaig-o galv-a ir*
 ADV ADV spin-PAST.3 head-NOM.SG. CONJ
labai ją skaud-ėj-o.
 ADV it.ACC.SG. hurt-PAST-3
 ‘Yesterday my head was spinning hard and hurt a lot.’
- 55) *Kai man su-lūž-o koj-a,*
 CONJ me.DAT. PREF-break-PAST.3 leg-NOM.SG.
ją ėm-ė stipriai skaudėti.
 it.ACC.SG. begin-PAST.3 ADV hurt-INF.
 ‘When my leg broke, it started to hurt severely.’

Although the body parts (“head” in (54) and “leg” in (55)) are the logical subject of both coordinated clauses, the accusative pronoun in the second clause cannot be omitted. The noun phrase in the accusative cannot be deleted under coreferentiality with the one in the nominative. It can therefore be inferred that the single argument introduced by the experiential verb does not respond positively to the subjecthood test devised specifically for Lithuanian.

The fact that the core argument of these verbs fails these tests would indicate that the process of reanalysis has not advanced to the point where patterns of Split Intransitivity have emerged.

As matter of fact, quirky subjects do not fail tests on subjecthood in all languages. A well-known case in literature is that of Icelandic, which has attracted the attention of many syntacticians inasmuch as the single argument introduced by the monovalent verb shows numerous properties associated with the prototypical subject, even though the aforesaid argument does not receive canonical case marking (see *inter al.* Zaenen, Maling, Thráinsson 1985; Andrews 1982a; 1982b; 2001; Barðal 2001). The evident opposition between Icelandic and many other languages (for instance German) has led a number of scholars to suggest that it is possible to speak of Split Intransitivity only in languages where non canonically marked noun phrases respond positively to the tests on subjecthood (Donohoue 2008; Malchukov 2008). However, discordant opinions on this *vexata quaestio* can also be found (*inter al.* Creissels 2007; 2008).

Despite this, I believe it is warranted to hypothesize that the syntactic behavior displayed by the noun phrases with accusative case marking studied here is not strictly and intrinsically linked to the concept of grammatical

relation, but rather to that of case. In other words, the tests on subjecthood reported in the literature may have a narrower scope in Lithuanian as compared to Icelandic, and they may not test the properties of the subject but rather those of the nominative case, prototypically associated with the grammatical relation of subject in Lithuanian. In Icelandic, as is known, coding and behavioral properties do not necessarily have to be combined in the same noun phrase: a dative noun phrase may “behave” like a subject even in the presence of a noun phrase with nominative case marking in the same sentence. In Lithuanian, on the other hand, only a nominative noun phrase can fulfill the syntactic function of controller or pivot, both of these being functions subsumed under what in RRG is defined as “Privileged Syntactic Argument” [PSA]¹³.

The selection rules concerning the PSA are highly restrictive in this language, as happens in German, Russian and Polish: “case assignment bears more significantly on PSA-selection in German and the Slavic languages than it does in Icelandic” (Wiemer 2008, 172).

Therefore, a noun phrase that does not have nominative case marking can be neither a controller nor a pivot in Lithuanian. To exemplify this, let us consider the following sentences:

56) *Policinink-ai* *jam* *padėj-o.*
 policeman-NOM.PL. he.DAT. help-PAST.3
 ‘Policemen helped him.’

57) *Jam* *buv-o* *padė-t-a.* Wiemer 2008, 187
 he.DAT. be-PAST.3 help-PTCP.PAST.PASS-N.
 ‘He was helped.’

In 57) there is no selection of a PSA in the backgrounding passive, because the dative noun phrase does not control verb agreement and shows no syntactic properties typical of verb agreement. Severe restrictions operate on AUH, and only an Undergoer, i.e. an argument with accusative case marking in the active voice, can receive nominative case marking in the passive voice and be promoted to PSA. The argument in the dative licensed by *padėti* thus remains unchanged both in the active and the passive voice; consequently it does not control

¹³ The theoretical framework of RRG holds that among the direct arguments of a verb, one of them must take on the privileged syntactic function, defined by a series of constraints. This argument is known as the “Privileged Syntactic Argument” or PSA. There are two types of PSA: the controller and the pivot.

verb agreement in the passive. In Icelandic, on the other hand, even a non-nominative noun phrase can show syntactic behaviour typical of the subject, because this language operates on a different hierarchy, APH¹⁴. Consequently in Lithuanian, as in German, it would seem that it is the nominative case, and not the syntactic concept of subject, that is directly linked to a given type of syntactic behaviour. Thus in Lithuanian the coding properties, and case marking in particular, can be identified as having priority over the syntactic concepts of subject and object, together with a strong correlation between morphological coding and the corresponding syntactic rules.

The same explanation can be applied for the behaviour of the constructions being analysed in negative sentences. Lithuanian has a rigid syntactic rule according to which the accusative case is substituted by the genitive when the verb is negated. However, in Old Lithuanian and in the dialects, (for example with *skaudėti* and *sopėti*) accusative case marking may be retained in negative sentences as well. According to Sen n (1966, 424), in negated sentences two kinds of constructions are possible:

- 58) *Man ne-skaud-a galv-os.*
 me.DAT NEG-ache-PRS.3 head-GEN.SG.

and

- 59) *Man galv-q ne-skaud-a.*
 me.DAT head-ACC.SG. NEG-ache-PRS.3
 'I do not have a headache.'

Additionally, in LKŽ, with reference to the entry for *nėsa*¹⁵ the following example is given:

¹⁴ This phenomenon is well described in Wiemer (2008), who adds cases drawn from the Slavic languages (mainly Russian and Polish) as well as Lithuanian to the canonical examples from German and Icelandic. In addition, Wiemer sets the phenomenon within a diachronic perspective, pointing out that languages which today show AUH oriented syntax were APH oriented in the past. Thus in Slavic languages and Lithuanian, the nuclear arguments encoded in the dative in the active voice were capable of behaving like PSA in the passive. Even today, in Lithuanian some verbs allow a noun phrase with dative case marking to be selected as PSA in the passive and thus control verb agreement. There emerges a conflict between principles based on the concept of macrorole and principles closely linked to APH.

¹⁵ An ancient allomorph, probably limited to dialect usage, of the negative form of the verb 'be'.

- 60) *Man nēsa dant-į sop-ėj-ę.*
 me.DAT. NEG.be.PRS.3 tooth-ACC.SG. hurt-PTCP.PRT.ACT-NOM.SG.
 ‘The tooth did not hurt me.’

Interestingly, it can be observed in these examples that the noun phrase with accusative case marking was permitted to behave as a subject, given that it retained its case marking in negative sentences. It would be necessary to identify other similar cases in order to confirm this hypothesis. In any case these “signals” are worth exploring in more detail as they could indicate a new interesting direction for patterns of Split Intransitivity.

It is therefore likely that the mechanism of reanalysis of the accusative noun phrase and its promotion from O to S_o could be found at a different stage compared to the situation which the close connection between case and syntactic rule suggests nowadays. In modern standard Lithuanian the rule is mandatory: the speaker automatically transforms the accusative of an affirmative sentence into the genitive in the corresponding negative sentence.

To sum up, the noun phrase with accusative case marking, whether Experiencer or Theme at the semantic level, cannot control verb agreement and cannot respond positively to tests on subjecthood, as these are the prerogative of the nominative case and not of the subject. Consequently, Lithuanian can be said to give priority to coding properties over behavioural properties, although the two properties are closely linked. Transposing these observations to a diachronic level, the single argument introduced by an intransitive predicate would show the syntactic properties characteristic of the subject, if it has first acquired the subject’s coding properties and, in particular, nominative case marking. However, given that these properties seem to be indissolubly linked, it would seem necessary to hypothesise that both are acquired at the same time. Such a scenario is indeed considered by Cole et al. (1980, 720) “There may be reason to believe that coding properties and behavioral properties are sometimes acquired simultaneously”. This would imply that in Lithuanian, there can be no cases of Split Intransitivity *stricto sensu*. The constructions under analysis here should more properly be viewed as impersonal constructions, in which the erstwhile subject has been demoted to the status of oblique, but instead nothing has been promoted to the position of subject.

Nevertheless, in Old Lithuanian (and in some dialects), the link between case and syntactic rule seems to be in some way less “binding”; in fact

examples are attested in which the noun phrase in the accusative case behaves like a subject, for example in negative sentences where it could retain its morphological marking like a canonical subject. This would suggest that the process of reanalysis could continue to advance¹⁶.

7. Conclusions

Recent advances in functional typology have shown that transitive constructions with an inanimate and indefinite Agent tend to be reanalysed as intransitive constructions via a transimpersonal phase. In the light of these theoretical insights, the present paper analysed several constructions in modern Lithuanian which had been interpreted as impersonal in reference grammars and demonstrated that they should be better re-categorised as transimpersonal.

The synchronic investigation carried out has revealed the existence of several different scenarios. More specifically, the experiencer verbs analysed are able to participate in different constructions, according to their specific meaning. If projected into a diachronic perspective, these synchronic scenarios shine a light on the various stages in the process of reanalysis as it gradually moves in the direction of the emergence of patterns of Split Intransitivity. A continuum of phases has been outlined, which can be briefly summarised as follows:

1) The first stage can be represented by the occurrence of a canonical transitive construction in which the Stimulus is encoded in the nominative and the Experiencer in the accusative. In this construction there is the possibility of removing the Stimulus from the argument structure, whereby the Stimulus receives a non-referential and generic reading, and/or of expressing the Stimulus through a prepositional phrase. This is found, for example, with causative verbs in *-inti* (or *-yti*), such as *troškinti* ‘to be thirsty’, *dusinti* ‘to stifle’, *pykinti* ‘to feel sick’, *purtyti* or *purtinti* ‘to be disgusted’, *laužyti* ‘to break’ (intr.), *kratyti* ‘to shake’. With such verbs, the presence of an overt marker of transitivity, i.e. the causative suffix, precludes the disappearance of the canonical transitive construction. Nevertheless, it does not prevent the verbs in question from being constructed to all intents and

¹⁶ It is worth bearing in mind that the present investigation is mainly focused on Modern Lithuanian. An accurate analysis of the constructions studied needs to be conducted in early literature as well, by taking into account both linguistic and philological aspects, such as the influence of the sources from which the first Lithuanian authors translate.

purposes like genuine, monovalent intransitives, where the single argument introduced receives accusative case marking and denotes the person involved in the event described by the verb.

2) At the second stage, the coding of the Stimulus in the nominative begins to be considered obsolete and the transitive construction tends to disappear, although it still remains marginally possible. If the speaker wishes to focus on the origin of a given psychological state, preference is awarded to the impersonal construction with the Stimulus encoded by means of a prepositional phrase. This is the situation observed for the verbs of the second group, which describe skin eruptions, such as *išberti* ‘to erupt’, *nukelti* ‘to appear’, *išmušti* ‘to become covered’, etc.

3) There follows the third phase, in which the Stimulus can be expressed only by means of a prepositional phrase. Given that it is no longer possible to introduce a noun phrase in the nominative, the construction has effectively been transformed from transitive to impersonal. On the syntactic level this transition corresponds to a process of reduction of the argument structure of the verb, from bivalent (transitive construction) to monovalent (intransitive construction). This process of reduction is presumed to happen for *skaudėti* ‘to feel pain’ and *sopėti* ‘to ache’, which nowadays do not allow the canonical transitive construction. This construction is, however, very rare with other verbs of pain, such as *diegti* ‘to feel a strong and sudden pain’, *gelti* ‘to ache a lot’, *mausti* ‘to ache a bit incessantly’.

4) When the argument structure of the verb is reduced to a single argument, the verb can be regarded as intransitive. However, the single argument introduced, which from the “logical” point of view should be the subject, is still an object both from the morphological and the syntactic point of view. To resolve this “conflict”, there arises a process of promotion of O to S_o: this is a gradual process, which starts out from the behavioural properties and concludes with the coding properties. That is to say, it can be presumed that O first behaves like an S and eventually acquires the coding properties of S, i.e. the nominative case.

This process of promotion would not appear to have been triggered in standard contemporary Lithuanian given that the arguments (Experiencer and Theme) licensed by the verbs being analysed all fail the subjecthood tests I devised. However, the subject-status of these arguments is a tricky

and complex matter, which should be addressed with caution. In particular, two aspects should be clarified. The first one is that syntactically derived subjects are usually less subject-like than basic subjects, and therefore need not respond positively to all the tests devised for basic subjects. The fact that these tests are valid for subjects of passive constructions (d-subjects) can only be considered a partial objection, as the arguments licensed by the verbs topic in this paper are *diachronically* derived subjects, while the subjects of passive constructions are *synchronically* derived subjects.

In addition, it is plausible to put forward the hypothesis that the tests on subjecthood reported in the literature may have a narrower scope in Lithuanian as compared for example to Icelandic. It could be said that they may not test the properties of the subject but rather those of the nominative case, prototypically associated with the grammatical relation of subject in Lithuanian. As a matter of fact, Lithuanian like German, imposes severe restrictions on the selection of the PSA: an argument not marked by the nominative case can be neither a controller nor a pivot. On the other hand, languages like Icelandic allow a noun phrase that does not bear nominative case marking to behave like a subject, since this language operates on the APH hierarchy.

Therefore, in my view, in Lithuanian the emergence of patterns of Split Intransitivity from so-called transimpersonal constructions seems to be subject to strong constraints mainly due to the tied interrelation between coding and behavioural properties. In order for a noun phrase to behave like a canonical subject it must have the coding of a canonical subject, i.e. the nominative case marking.

Thus, it has to be presumed that once the process of reanalysis has been triggered, these properties are acquired simultaneously by the noun phrase with accusative case marking. This is the situation observed, for instance, in some Lithuanian dialects, where there is a direct transition from an impersonal construction *mane sopa* ‘I am aching’ (literally “[it] is aching me”) to a personal construction *Aš sopu* ‘I am aching’. There is a “covert reanalysis of experiencer objects”, namely a sort of leap, which does not involve gradual acquisition of subject status by the noun phrase, starting from syntactic properties and thence proceeding to the morphological properties.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that in Old Lithuanian, there are cases – with *skaudėti* and *sopėti* ‘to ache’ – in which the noun phrase marked by the accusative case in negative sentences behaved like a subject, i.e. it was not encoded by the genitive but still remained in the accusative, showing the behaviour typical of S. This leads to suppose that in Old Lithuanian there were conditions which could allow the emergence of patterns of Split Intransitivity.

The data I have collected so far from dialects and in a minor part from Old Lithuanian deserve a more detailed investigation, since they allow a glimpse of an interesting path of investigation in the field of diachronic Lithuanian syntax.

LIETUVIŲ KALBOS TRANSIMPERSONALINĖS KONSTRUKCIJOS: DALINIO INTRANZITYVUMO FORMAVIMASIS

Santrauka

Transimpersonalinės konstrukcijos pastaruoju metu yra patraukusios daugelio tyrėjų, ypač funkcinės tipologijos specialistų, dėmesį, kadangi jos atlieka svarbų vaidmenį formuojantis dalinio intransityvumo (ang. *split intransitivity*) modeliams įvairiose kalbose. Straipsnyje naujausių pasiekimų šviesoje įvertinamos kai kurios lietuvių kalbos konstrukcijos, gramatikose laikomos beasmenėmis („impersonalinėmis“), mėginant interpretuoti jas kaip transimpersonalines.

Tyrimas atliktas iš sinchroninės perspektyvos, didžiausią dėmesį skiriant dabartinei bendrinei kalbai, tačiau tam tikrais atvejais lyginama ir su senosios lietuvių kalbos ir ypač tarmių duomenimis.

Analizė remiasi fizinę būklę nusakančiais veiksmažodžiais, kurie priklausomai nuo reikšmės gali būti vartojami įvairiose sintaksinėse konstrukcijose. Sinchroniname lygmenyje matomas skirtingas šių eksperiencinių veiksmažodžių elgesys gali būti projektuojamas diachroninėje perspektyvoje. Taip galima geriau išryškinti įvairius reanalizės proceso, rodančio laipsnišką raidą dalinio intransityvumo atsiradimo kryptimi, etapus. Kai kurie veiksmažodžiai, atrodo, reanalizės kelyje yra pažengę gana toli, tačiau tikrieji dalinio intransityvumo modeliai dar nesusiformavę. Analizuojamųjų veiksmažodžių eksperiencinių argumentų subjekto statusas sintaksės požiūriu tebelieka problemiškas.

ABBREVIATIONS

1	first person	LOC	locative
2	second person	M	masculine
3	third person	N	neuter
A	agent-like argument of transitive verb	NEG	negation, negative
ACT	active	NOM	nominative
ADJ	adjective	P	patient-like argument of canonical transitive verb
ACC	accusative	PADAL	padalyvis
AUX	auxiliary verb	PASS	passive
CAUS	causative	PL	plural
CONJ	conjunction	POSS	possessive
COP	copula	PREF	prefixe
DAT	dative	PREP	preposition
GEN	genitive	PRS	present
IMPERS	impersonal	PAST	past
IND	indicative	PTCP	participle
INDF	indefinite	Q	question particle
INF	infinitive	SEMPRT	semiparticipe (pusdalyvis)
INS	instrumental	SG	singular

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