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EXPERIENCING TIME IN ESTONIAN CONSTRUCTIONS WITH AN ADJECTIVE AND AN MA-INFINITIVE

Abstract. In this article I present the characteristics of the Estonian construction combining an adjective and an MA-infinitive in illative (X is ADJ V-MAINF), such as in *Lili oli kärme plaksutama* 'Lili was quick to applaud' or *robot on võimeline ülesandeid lahendama* 'the robot is able to carry out tasks'. In this construction the subject is characterised by means of a copula and an adjective, and this characterisation is related to an activity that is specified by a verb in the MA-infinitive form. Using corpus data I provide an overview of the types of subjects that appear in the construction. Is the subject usually human? Can it be inanimate? How does the character of the subject affect the meaning of the sentence? Next I concentrate on a specific subvariant of the construction that takes an inanimate subject, such as in *Sügis on kiire tulema* 'Autumn is quick to come' or *Petlik mulje on kerge tekkima* 'A false impression is easily formed' (lit. a false impression is easy to come into existence), in which the meaning of the sentence is related to the experience of time and includes a prediction of how likely or unlikely an event is to occur or be experienced. The article presents a description of this specific variant and its meaning based on corpus examples and argues that this category of sentences should be treated as a subschema of X is ADJ V-MAINF because it has features that are not found in the general construction. The article uses the framework of cognitive grammar (L a n g a c k e r 1987; 2000; 2008) and in particular the term *constructional schema* (L a n g a c k e r 2000, 21, 32–33; 2008, 23–24, 168).
Keywords: Estonian; constructional schema; time; MA-infinitive; adjective.

1. Introduction

In this article I intend to analyse the Estonian construction combining an adjective with an MA-infinitive, which can be seen in examples (1–2) below:

(1) *Iga muusikapala lõppe-de-s ol-i Lili kärme plaksuta-ma.*
each music.piece.GEN.SG end-DAINF-INE be-PST.3SG Lili brisk applaud-MAINF.ILL

'Lili was quick to applaud at the end of each piece of music.'

(2) *Sügis*   *on*   *kiire*   *tule-ma.*
     autumn   be3   quick   come-MAINF.ILL
     'Autumn is quick to come.'

First I will concentrate on the subject component of the construction. The subject component is characterised by an adjective and further specified by an MA-infinitive. In this manner the subject can be characterised as suitable or unsuitable for some purpose, inclined or disinclined to take some action, or as possessing some other specific property in respect to some activity (such as being quick as in examples 1 and 2). Most often the subject denotes a person, but other types of subjects appear as well.

The analysis of the subject component based on material from the *Balanced Corpus of Estonian* is a necessary first step to my later claim that there is a specific subvariant of the construction that is semantically distinct. This subvariant takes an inanimate subject and provides a means to express human experiences of the passing of time and the occurrence of events (example 2). This subvariant represents only a very small part of the examples found in the corpus, but its distinct meaning is worthy of further attention.

I have chosen a cognitive grammarian approach to the topic as it provides the central concept of the article, that of constructional schema. In addition cognitive grammar is concerned with the diverse ways of relating human experience by linguistic means and also pays special attention to the imaginative capacity of the everyday use of language.

2. Constructional schema

In this section I will briefly explain the cognitive grammarian approach to constructions (Langacker 1987; 2000; 2008) that I will rely on when describing Estonian constructions using an adjective and an MA-infinitive.

A constructional schema is an assembly of symbolic units that can be abstracted from specific constructions appearing in the language (Langacker 2008, 23–24, 167–170; 2000, 21, 32–33, 53). For example the constructional schema combining an adjective and an MA-infinitive can be abstracted from sentences appearing in corpora that share some facets of both form and meaning: in terms of form, a subject in nominative, the verb *olema* 'to be' as a copula, an adjective in nominative and a verb in MA-infinitive; and as for meaning, a characteristic of the subject is related to a specific activity expressed by the MA-infinitive.

The components of a constructional schema can be specific or abstract to various degrees. For example in the constructional schema analysed here, [[NOUN/...][OLEMA$_{FINITE}$/o...][ADJ/...][VERB-MAINF/...]],[1] the finite verb is defined as *olema* 'to be' and is therefore more specific than the rest of the construction (a range of adjectives, nouns and verbs can serve as predicate adjective, subject and MA-infinitive). Complex constructional schemas can be more or less specific and can often be expressed at various levels of precision or abstraction (Langacker 2008, 24). Constructional schemas may overlap, one constructional schema may represent a more specific instantiation of another constructional schema or a constructional schema may include another constructional schema (Langacker 2008, 24). The constructional schema presented above, for example, includes a predicative schema consisting of a noun, a copula and an adjective. Constructional schemas that overlap or are instantiations of one another can be also regarded as a family of schemas and subschemas (Langacker 1995, 55–56).

Constructional schemas represent a part of a language's grammar. They are described by Langacker as "conventionally established patterns for putting together symbolic assemblies" and as "templates for dealing with novel expression on the same pattern" (Langacker 2008, 168). Speakers and learners of a language may rely on constructional schemas when considering the well-formedness of complex expressions, whether fixed or novel. According to cognitive grammar, knowledge of a language's grammar covers a vast and structured inventory of constructional schemas of various degrees of complexity and schematicity (Langacker 2008, 24; 2000, 21).

It is also possible that not every instantiation of a constructional schema will be coherent with the schema in every detail. In this case the constructional schema offers only partial sanction for such instantiations, and the relation between the schema and the instantiation is one of extension (Langacker 1987, 68–70; 2008, 170). In this way, innovation, dynamism and a degree of nonconventionality in the use of constructional schemas in language can be explained (Langacker 2008, 170).

Another important aspect of the theoretical framework is that complex

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[1] Square brackets are used to indicate a symbolic unit; on the left side of the slash the semantic pole of the unit is represented, and on the right side the phonological pole is represented. Three dots represent unspecified content (Langacker 1987, 66–86; 2000, 4–5).

assemblies are not expected to be fully compositional. Constructions are expected to have facets of meaning that cannot be derived from their parts (L a n g a c k e r 2000, 4–5, 22–24; 2008, 170). We understand the meaning of the construction not only by putting together its parts, but also through knowledge of the context, general knowledge or experience and imaginative capacities including metaphor or metonymy (L a n g a c k e r 2008, 170).

3. The Estonian constructional schema combining an adjective and an MA-infinitive

In this section I will describe the constructional schema in Estonian that combines an adjective with an MA-infinitive and relates a characteristic of the subject to a specific activity. I give examples of the constructional schema from the *Balanced Corpus of Estonian*, present an overview of how this construction is described in Estonian grammars and elaborate on these descriptions using the cognitive grammarian framework.

The Estonian constructional schema abbreviated as 'X is ADJ V-MAINF' can be exemplified by (1–2) above and (3–4) below. All examples are from the *Balanced Corpus of Estonian*.

(3) *Ta   ei   ole veel küps oma tee-d   vali-ma.*
    He/she NEG   be   yet   ripe own path-PTV.SG choose-MAINF.ILL
    'He/she is not yet ready to choose his/her own way.'

(4) *Ahv   on   kiire kaos-t   loo-ma.*
    monkey   be3   quick chaos-PTV   create-MAINF.ILL
    'The monkey is quick to create chaos.'

The subschema I wish to pay special attention to is represented by (2, 5–6). I will refer to it as the subschema SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA (example 2).

(5) *Aasta-d   on   kärme-d   kulu-ma.*
    year-NOM.PL   be3   brisk-NOM.PL wear.out-MAINF.ILL
    'Years are quick to pass.'

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(6) *Vana-d*   *traditsiooni-d*   *on*   *visa-d*   *kadu-ma.*

old-NOM.   tradition-NOM.   be3   persistent-   disappear-MAINF.ILL
PL   PL   NOM.PL

'Old traditions are not likely to disappear.'

For both the general schema and its subschema the following characterisations can be made: The subject in nominative is first characterised by means of the copula 'to be' and an adjective agreeing with the subject in number. The infinitive form (which usually follows the adjective) further specifies the activity to which the characteristics given by the adjective pertain. The word order is not necessarily subject-copula-adjective-MA-infinitive, as can be seen in (1). While in the general schema the MA-infinitive can have its own object, as in (4), in the SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA subschema the MA-infinitive is always an intransitive verb.

The adjective/MA-infinitive construction is mentioned in *Eesti keele grammatika* 2: *Süntaks*, the comprehensive grammar of Estonian (E r e l t et al. 1993, 254–255), in which the MA-infinitive is said to be the complement of an adjective expressing a characteristic of the agent or activity, such as in *Ta oli olnud agar organiseerima* 'He/she had been eager to organise (things)', *Hädad on kerged tulema* 'Misfortune occurs easily' (lit. misfortunes are easy to come) and *Kopsupõletik on visa vaibuma* 'Pneumonia is slow to subside'. The last two examples seem to be compatible with the subschema SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA. In *Eesti keele süntaks*, the comprehensive syntax of Estonian (EKS, 794–795), the MA-infinitive is said to describe a purpose and to combine with adjectives expressing suitability for that purpose (such as *sobiv* 'appropriate, befitting', *paras* 'the best'), readiness, commitment or another kind of indirect suitability for the purpose (such as *valmis* 'ready') or some quality of the agent or activity that enables suitability for a purpose (such as *aeglane* 'slow', *osav* 'good at').

In her study of Estonian constructions with DA- and MA-infinitives, P e n j a m (2008, 160–161) mentions the construction with an adjective predicate and MA-infinitive under constructions of motion / suitability, along with examples with a verbal predicate or a predicate combining a copula and an adverb. According to P e n j a m's corpus-based study, adjective predicates are less common and less frequently used in combination with

an MA-infinitive than verbal or adverbial predicates are (2008, 160). The construction is also mentioned by Tauli (1983, 221), who states that the MA-infinitive specifies the action in which the meaning expressed by the adjective appears. Wiedemann (2005[1875], 446–447) also describes the combination of a nominal predicate and an MA-infinitive; among his examples are *wiza kaswama* (langsam wachsend) and *hull siginema* (gewaltig schnell sich vermehrend), which resemble the subschema SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA.

In terms of cognitive grammar (Langacker 2008, 116) an adjective is a relational predicate relating its trajector (the X component of the construction, the subject of the clause in nominative) to a landmark that typically is not independently specified; in (1–2, 4–5) the adjective (*kiire* 'quick', *kärme* 'brisk') positions the trajector on a scale of speed / promptness. The use of the copula (a finite form of the verb *olema* 'to be') marks the scene as processual (Langacker 2008, 396–397), and the tense marker on the copula enables various kinds of relative time framing. The MA-infinitive relates the given characteristic to the process specified by the verb. Importantly, the trajector of the process specified by the MA-infinitive is the clause level subject (the clause level subject and the subject of the infinitive verb are the same). The MA-infinitive can also be said to specify the active zone of the subject for the characteristic given by the adjective (Langacker 1995, 25–30). In other words, in (1) Lili is said to react quickly when applauding, but the characteristic does not extend to other activities that might be performed by Lili. This corresponds with the statements in the Estonian grammar (Erelt et al. 1993, 254) and Estonian syntax (EKS, 795) mentioned above that indicate that the adjective provides a characteristic of the agent or activity. The characteristic given by the adjective is related both to the subject and to the MA-infinitive because the MA-infinitive specifies the activity to which the given characteristic of the subject pertains – the subject's active zone in respect to that characteristic.

4. Constructions with adjectives and infinitives in Estonian, Finnish and English

In this section I will consider constructions combining an adjective with an infinitive in Estonian, Finnish and English and compare the different kinds of relations between the subject (the X component characterised by the adjective) and the process specified by the infinitive form. The relation of

the subject to the complement process is important because in the following section I will turn my attention to the subject component of the Estonian construction combining an adjective and an MA-infinitive.

When considering constructions with an adjective and an infinitive form, it is helpful to note that various combinations of subject, adjective predicate and infinitive may not always exhibit the same kind of relation between the components. In the Estonian MA-infinitive construction described above, the X component is the subject (the trajector) in respect to the process specified by the infinitive. For example in (4) *ahv* 'monkey' is the subject (the trajector) in respect to *looma* 'to create'; in this case the object of the infinitive (the landmark, the secondary participant in the scene profiled by the verb *looma*) is also specified by *kaaos-t* 'chaos-PART.SG', which precedes the infinitive. A similar construction with the MA-infinitive (also called the third infinitive) in illative exists in Finnish. For example, in *Hän on nopea oppimaan* 'He/she is quick to learn', the subject of the sentence is also the subject in respect to learning. In these constructions the clause level subject (X) bears the relation of trajector both in respect to the adjective and in respect to the process specified by the infinitive.

As Langacker (1995) has pointed out, this is not true for English constructions previously referred to as OSR (object to subject raising constructions), such as *Portraits are tough to paint* or *That book is impossible for Paul to read*. In these constructions, *portraits* or *that book* (the trajectors of *tough* and *difficult*) are the landmarks of the process specified by the infinitive (*to paint*, *to read*) (Langacker 1995, 33–34, 51–55). As can be seen in the second example, the experiencer that represents the trajector of the infinitive verb (*to read*) can be overtly specified with a *for*-phrase (*for Paul*). However, the experiencer tends to be unspecified and construed generically. The construction describes an experience that someone could have when interacting with the subject, and the adjective usually specifies the degree of ease or difficulty the experiencer encounters (Langacker 1995, 51).

A similar meaning can be expressed in Finnish by using an adjective in combination with the A-infinitive or the present participle – for example, *Ainon traaginen kohtalo on helppo esittää kansainväliselle yleisölle* 'The tragic destiny of Aino is easy to present to an international audience' or *Kello on vaikea korjattava* 'The watch is difficult to repair' (Pekkarinen 2005). In Finnish these constructions form a family of constructions with variability

in the adjective or participle's case and with some overlaps and differences in meaning (P e k k a r i n e n 2005, 128, 142–145). In Finnish the experiencer can be expressed using the allative case as in the first example above (*kansainväliselle yleisölle* 'for/to an international audience'), but it is not very common (P e k k a r i n e n 2005, 128). In Estonian the DA-infinitive (diachronically a counterpart to the Finnish A-infinitive) can be used in similar constructions. According to Estonian grammars (E r e l t et al. 1993, 241; EKS, 781) the DA-infinitive as an adverbial can be combined with an adjective denoting degree of suitability for the purpose, such as *paras* 'appropriate', *kasulik* 'useful', *kasutu* 'useless', *ohtlik* 'dangerous, unsafe', *ohutu* 'safe', for example, *Laud on raske tõsta* 'The table is heavy to lift' or *See laul on ilus kuulata* 'The song is beautiful to hear'. While the variety and properties of constructions with the DA-infinitive in Estonian are beyond the scope of this article, it suffices to say that different properties can be expected from constructions with an adjective and the DA-infinitive on the one hand and constructions combining an adjective and the MA-infinitive on the other hand.

5. Typical subjects of the construction X is ADJ V-MAINF

In this section I will analyse the subject component of the Estonian construction X is ADJ V-MAINF using data from the *Balanced Corpus of Estonian*. I will then consider the subject component of those sentences from the corpus that are coherent with the subschema previously named SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA.

In order to find out what kind of subjects appear in the construction with an adjective and an MA-infinitive in illative, I analysed examples from the *Balanced Corpus of Estonian* (the corpus consists of 15 million words, with one third made up of journalistic texts, one third fiction and one third scholarly texts). As the first step, I assembled those adjectives that appear in the construction according to the descriptions in grammars (E r e l t et al. 1993, 254–255, 73; T a u l i 1983, 221) and also searched for adjectives directly followed by an MA-infinitive in illative. In the second step I searched for specific adjectives co-occurring in the same clause with the verb *olema* 'to be' and an MA-infinitive form in illative. The material therefore includes examples in which the components are in a different order or do not directly follow each other. After manually extracting undesirable examples, the result was 1,311 examples. For the present study I examined the subject NP in each example and observed the following tendencies.

The most common subjects were personal subjects represented by a personal pronoun (example 3) or in some cases by a proper (*Lili*, example 1) or common name (*poisid* 'boys'). Subjects denoting a generic person, as in (7), can also be found. In some sentences, such as (8–9), the predicate is in impersonal mood and there is no overt subject. The subject of such sentences is usually understood as an existing but unspecified animate agent, as in (8), though it might also be generic in such a way that the agent is potential and not actual, as in (9), with both the number and the person of the agent unspecified (E r e l t et al. 1993, 31).

(7) *Inimene on   valmis   hävita-ma   asju,*
    human   be3   ready   destroy-MAINF.ILL   thing.PTV.PL
    'One is ready to destroy things

   mida   ta   hästi   tunne-b.
   which   he/she   well   know-3SG
   that one knows well.'

(8) *Selle   eest   ol-di   valmis   ka   maks-ma.*
    this.GEN.SG   for   be-IMPRS.PST ready   too   pay-MAINF.ILL
    'They/we were ready to pay for this.'

(9) *Nooruse-s   ol-lakse   võimelise-d   tege-ma*
    youth-INE   be-IMPRS.PRS   able-NOM.PL   do-MAINF.ILL
    'Being young, one is able to do

   päris   hulle   asju.
   guite   crazy.PTV.PL   thing.PTV.PL
   quite crazy things.'

Non-human subjects were less common and can be divided into six subcategories. These subcategories are linked to the centre of the category (personal subjects) by metonymy or personification. The subcategories are: institutions, instruments for human activity, artificial intelligence,

biological organisms or their parts, inanimate personified subjects and events (similar tendencies were obeserved by H y ö v a l t i (2016, 49–53) in Finnish constructions with adjectives and MA-infinitives used in dialects and journalistic texts).

The first subcategory consists of names of institutions such as *riik* 'state', *Eesti* 'Estonia', *EL* 'EU', *valitsus* 'government', *parlament* 'parliament', *instituut* 'institute', *erakond* 'political party', *pank* 'bank' and *juriidiline isik* 'juridical person' (example 10). The subcategory is metonymical: a human agent or collective acts on behalf of the institution. The second subcategory consists of nouns conveying human activity such as *sõnad* 'words', *mõtted* 'thoughts', *teaduse keel* 'the language of science', *hääl* 'voice' and *tekst* 'text' (example 11). The third subcategory is nouns denoting technological devices or artificial intelligence such as *arvuti* 'computer', *tarkvara* 'software', *programmide kogum* 'set of programs', *robot* 'robot', *optilised võrgud* 'optical network', *protsessor* 'processor' and *Windows XP*. In some cases we can speak of metonymy (in example 12, a human agent uses the device to act or is behind its programming, and the subject is an instrument similar to those in the second subcategory), but interpretation via personification is also sometimes possible (a program or robot is seen as acting at least partly on its own, as in example 13). The fourth subcategory is formed by the names of non-human biological organisms (animals, plants, viruses) or parts of organisms, such as *liblikad* 'butterflies', *taimed* 'plants', *karuputk* 'hogweed', *mikroob* 'microbe', *viirus* 'virus', *looduslikud protsessid* 'natural processes', *süda* 'heart' and *veresooned* 'blood vessels'. Here the subject can be an agent without any need for metonymy or personification. In (14–15) the subjects (*karuputk* 'hogweed', *bakteerid* 'bacteria') can be seen either as sufficiently animate and agentive to act in the situations described, or as to some degree personified.

(10)	...	*üksnes*	*parlament*	*on*	*pädev*	*te-da*	*vallanda-ma.*
		only	parlia-ment	be3	compe-tent	he/she-PTV.SG	remove.from.office-MAINF.ILL

    '...only parliament is qualified to remove her/him from office.'

(11) **Sõna-d** **on** **võimetu-d** **kirjelda-ma** **se-da** **ekstaasi.**
word- be3 unable-NOM. describe-MAINF. that-PTV. ecstasy.PTV.
NOM.PL PL ILL SG SG

'Words are unable to describe that ecstasy.'

(12) **Nõudmise-d** **töökoha-arvuti-le** **on** **üsna** **väikese-d** –
recquirement-NOM. workplace-computer- be3 quite small-NOM.
PL ALL.SG PL

'Not much is required from a computer at the workplace –

see **pea-b** **ole-ma** **võimeline** **käita-ma**
it have.to-3.SG be-MA.INF.ILL able use-MAINF.ILL

it has to be able to use

Xwindowsi **serveri-t** **(Xfree)** **ja** **openssh (OpenSSH)** **klienti.**
Xwindows.GEN. server-PTV. (Xfree) and openssh client-PTV.
SG SG (OpenSSH) SG

an X window server (Xfree) and an openssh (OpenSSH) client.'

(13) **Intelligentne** **ja** **iseseisev** **robot** **on**
intelligent and independent robot be3

'An intelligent and independent robot is

võimeline **ülesande-id** **lahenda-ma.**
able task-PTV.PL solve-MAINF.ILL

able to carry out tasks.'

(14) **Kruusase-l** **pinnase-l** **on** **karuputk** **endiselt**
gravelled-ADE surface-ADE be3 hogweed Still

'On the gravel the hogweed is still

visa **kasva-ma.**
persisent grow-MAINF.ILL

growing persistently.'

(15) Suur osa vatsa-s ela-va-te-st bakteeri-te-st
large part stomach-INE live-PTCP.PRS-PL-ELA bacterium-PL-ELA
'Many of the bacteria living in the stomach

on võimelise-d kasuta-ma oma kasvu-ks ja
be3 able-NOM. use-MAINF. own growth-
    PL ILL   TRANSL
are also able to use free amino acids and peptides

arengu-ks ka vabu aminohappe-id ja peptiide.
development- also free-PTV. amino.acis-PTV. and peptide-PTV.
TANSL   PL   PL   PL
for their own growth and development.'

Personification is more clear in the case of inanimate subjects, as in (16–17), and personification might explain the origin of examples belonging to the subschema SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA such as (2, 5–6).

(16) Bussi-d ol-i-d pärast tee-le aita-mis-t
buss-NOM. be-PST- after road-ALL.SG help-NMLZ-PTV
PL 3PL
'After being helped to the road the busses

võimelise-d oma-l jõul edasi liiku-ma.
able-NOM. own- force- forward move-MAINF.ILL
PL ADE ADE
were able to continue on their own.'

(17) Nee-d bastioni-d ja kummalise-d kindlusemüüri-d
this-NOM.PL bastion-NOM. and bizarre-NOM. battlement–NOM.
   PL   PL   PL
'Those bastions and bizarre battlements

ol-i-d ju valmis varies-ma, taeva-st alla lange-ma!
be-PST-3PL but ready crumble- heaven- down fall-MAINF.
   MAINF.ILL ELA   ILL
were ready to crumble, to fall down from heaven!'

Common to the category of the subject is the tendency to acquire an agent-like role, even if the subject is inanimate. This can be related to the fact that the subject is the trajector in respect to the activity described by the MA-infinitive. According to Langacker (1995, 52–55), in constructions in English where the clause-level subject is the object of the complement process, the subject is to some degree held responsible for the complement process and the experience it engenders, such as in the example *Paul has been impossible to live with* – though the responsibility can be quite abstract or tenuous. In the Estonian construction with an MA-infinitive the responsibility for the complement process is apparent because the subject is the trajector in respect to both the adjective and the complement process. The preference for person-like or personified subjects that can acquire an agent-like role is therefore in accordance with these constructional properties.

As can be observed from the following examples (19–27, see also 2, 5–6), the subjects of the subschema sügis on kiire tulema do not fit the person-like and agentive categories described above. In the subschema, the subject often denotes a time period (*sügis* 'autumn', *aastad* 'years', example 5) or event (*sündmused* 'events', *konflikt* 'conflict'). Nouns defined primarily or significantly with respect to the domain of time can also be found (*vanad traditsioonid* 'old traditions', *sotsiaalsed liikumised* 'social movements', *moevoolud* 'streams of fashion', example 6). In other cases, the subject acquires an event-like interpretation when participating in this construction. In (19) it is the event of being fined that is said to occur easily, and in (20) it is the situation of being in possession of money that will likely not occur; a similar interpretation is possible in (21–25). Some cases, such as (26–27), might also be considered transitional between the examples of personification (16–17) and the subschema sügis on kiire tulema.

(19) *Trahv*　　　　　*on*　　　　　*kerge*　　　　*tulema.*
　　　penalty (fine)　　be3　　　　easy　　　　come-MAINF.ILL
　　　'One can easily get fined.' (Lit. 'A fine is easy to come.')

(20) *Raha*　　*aga*　　*ol-i*　　*väga*　*visa*　　*tule-ma.*
　　　money　　but　　be-PST3SG　very　persistent　come-MAINF.ILL
　　　'But money just would not come.'

(21) *Ja   ta   naerata-b   vastu   ja*
     and   he/she   smile-3SG   back   and
     'And he/she smiles back and

     see   naeratus   on   nii   kerge   tule-ma.
     this   smile   be3   so   easy   come-MAINF.ILL
     the smile comes (to her/his face) so easily.'

(22) *Ja   nii   on=gi   vale-d   järelduse-d*
     and   thus   be3=as.well   false-NOM.PL   conclusion-NOM.PL
     'And thus are false conclusions

     kiire-d   tule-ma.
     quick-NOM.PL   come-MAINF.ILL
     easily made.'

(23) *Üksmeel   ol-i   ne-i-s   küsimus-te-s   visa   tekki-ma.*
     concen-   be-   this-PL-   question-PL-   obstinate   come-MAINF.
     sus   PST.3SG   INE   INE   ILL
     'It was difficult to reach consensus on these issues.'

(24) *Petlik   mulje   on   kerge   tekki-ma.*
     false   impression   be3   easy   come.into.existence-MAINF.ILL
     'A false impression is easily formed.'

(25) *Veepea-l   on   päikesepõletus   kerge   tekki-ma.*
     water.surface-   be3   sunburn   easy   come.into.existence-MAINF.ILL
     ADE
     'One can easily get a sunburn when on the water.'

(26) *Haava-d   on   raske-d   parane-ma.*
     wound-NOM.PL   be3   difficult-NOM.PL   heal-MAINF.ILL
     'Wounds heal with difficulty.'

(27)   *...naeratuse-ga,*   *mis*   *ol-i*   *sama*   *kerge*   *libise-ma*   *üle*

smile–COM   which   be-PST.3SG   same   easy   slide–MAINF. ILL   over

'... with a smile, which slid over his/her face just as easily

ta   *näo*   *ja*   *peituma*   *siis*   *suunurka-de-sse ...*

he/she.GEN.SG   face.GEN.SG   and   hide–MAINF. ILL   then   corner of the mouth-PL-ILL

as it hid in the corners of his/her mouth, ...'

However, it does not seem plausible to consider all subjects in (19–27) to be personified. What is more, there seems to be a recurrent pattern in the meaning of these examples: an event is considered probable or improbable. I would argue that this is one reason to treat these examples as belonging to a specific subschema (we could also speak of an extension in respect to the general schema X is ADJ V-MAINF): their subjects do not conform easily to the category of the subject of the general schema X is ADJ V-MAINF.

6. The adjective and infinitive components of the subschema

In this section I will concentrate on the adjectives and infinitives that appear in the sentences from the corpus that seem to represent the same constructional schema as sentences (2, 5–6) and (19–27) presented above.

In the material from the corpus I found 42 examples that have characteristics similar to those of examples (2, 5–6) and (19–27) presented above. Rather than describing the abilities or inclinations of agent-like and self-conscious subjects, they seem to be related to experiencing time or predicting the likelihood of some event. If we analyse the Estonian construction with an adjective and an MA-infinitive (X is ADJ V-MAINF) as a family of constructions (L a n g a c k e r 1995, 56), this particular subschema would represent a branch that does not seem to exist in Finnish, which otherwise has a very similar construction with the MA-infinitive.[2] However, the subschema, with its 42 examples, forms only about 3 percent of the

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[2] While there does not seem to be a similar pattern in Finnish, it is possible to construct a similar expression. In the Kielipankki corpus two occurrences of the sentence *Kesä oli innostunut tulemaan* 'summer was eager to come', from the author Juhani Aho, can be found (texts are literary, years of publication 1891/1920).

material collected from the corpus. Only seven adjectives appeared in the subschema sügis on kiire tulema. The number of occurrences is listed below:

Table 1. **Adjectives occurring in the subschema sügis on kiire tulema**

adjective	number of occurrences
kerge 'light/easy'	17
visa 'persistent'	10
kiire 'quick, swift'	7
raske 'hard, heavy, difficult'	4
varmas 'prompt, firm'	2
kärme 'brisk'	1
vihane 'angry'	1

Some of the adjectives listed in Table 1 are near synonyms: *kiire* 'quick, swift', *varmas* 'prompt, firm' and *kärme* 'brisk'. The adjective *vihane*, in its only appearance, *Aastad on vihased kuluma* 'Years are angry (= swift) to pass', has a similar meaning. There are also pairs of antonyms: *kerge* and *raske*, and *kiire* (*varmas*, *kärme*, *vihane*) and *visa*. These adjectives occasionally appeared in my material in combination with a personal or animate subject as well (see examples 1 and 4), but such examples are less common for the listed adjectives than examples fitting the subschema sügis on kiire tulema.

The range of verbs that can form the MA-infinitive in this construction is also quite restricted. Typical are verbs quite abstract in meaning such as *tulema* 'to come' (16 occurrences), *tekkima* 'to come into existence' (10 occurrences), *kaduma* 'to disappear' (5 occurrences), *kuluma* 'to wear out' (2 occurrences), and *ununema* 'to fade from memory', *vahelduma* 'to alternate, vary', *jõudma* 'to come to, to get to', *vaibuma* 'to die away, to subside', *levima* 'to spread', *juhtuma* 'to happen', *kanduma* 'to carry over, to spread' and *laekuma* 'to arrive, to come in' (1 occurrence each). These verbs can acquire an existential meaning that is mostly dynamic – they speak of coming into existence or ceasing to exist. Verbs with more specific meaning such as *paranema* 'to get well, to heal', *libisema* 'to slide' and *peituma* 'hide' occur only sporadically. An interpretation based on personification is more plausible in examples with a verb with more specific meaning (see examples 26–27).

As we have seen above, the adjective usually denotes the speed, ease or difficulty with which something occurs. This polarity of the adjective

component is further elaborated by an existential verb; in most typical examples, the verb states either that the subject will come to existence (easily or not easily, quickly or hindered) or cease to exist (again the process can be swift and easy or hindered). The infinitive component and the polarity of the adjective thus combine to form a prediction of how likely or unlikely something is to happen. Some combinations, including the most typical, are shown in the table below:

Table 2. **Combinations of adjective and infinitive occurring in the sub-schema**

occurrence in time	
positive	negative
kiire tulema	*visa tekkima*
'quick' 'to come'	'persistent' 'to come into existence'
kerge tulema	*raske tulema*
'easy' 'to come'	'difficult' 'to come'
kerge tekkima	*raske tagasi tulema*
'easy' 'to come into existence'	'difficult' 'to come back'
visa kaduma	*kiire ununema*
'persistent' 'to disappear'	'quick' 'to fade from memory'
visa vaibuma	*kiire kaduma*
'persistent' 'to die away'	'quick' 'to disappear'

Similarly, in sentences that describe the passing of time, such as *Aastad on kärmed kuluma* 'Years are quick to pass' and *Moevoolud on kiired vahelduma* 'Fashion is prone to change', the existing situation (the present year, the present fashion) is likely or even bound to disappear, its place taken by another situation of the same kind.

The smooth and quick appearance of something can of course be undesirable, as in the example *Sügis on kiire tulema* 'Autumn is quick to come'. Other negative events that are thought to occur all too quickly were *vigastused* 'injuries', *valed järeldused* 'false conclusions', *vaidlused* 'disputes', *kahtlused* 'doubts', *ületreenitus* 'overtraining', *jama* 'crap', *konflikt* 'conflict', *vead* 'mistakes', *päikesepõletus* 'sunburn', *trahv* 'penalty/fine' and *petlik mulje* 'false impression'. On the other hand, the occurrence of positive events such as *naeratus* 'smile' or fairly neutral situations such as *paralleelid* 'parallels' or *mõte* 'thought' can also be expressed.

The subschema SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA can also be characterised by its adjective and infinitive components. The adjective typically relates the subject to the scale of swiftness, ease or difficulty. The infinitive is typically an existential verb denoting either coming into existence or ceasing to exist. When the adjective and the infinitive combine, they express how likely or unlikely the subject is to occur.

7. Conclusion

As we have seen above, the subject of the Estonian construction X is ADJ V-MAINF is typically quite agent-like and usually channels human or human-like activity in some way. The agentiveness of the subject is natural since it is the trajector of the process denoted by the MA-infinitive. The whole construction can be said to describe the subject's relation to that activity by means of an adjective. In Langacker's terms the infinitive specifies the subject's active zone for the characteristics expressed by the adjective (L a n g a c k e r 1995, 25–30).

There are several arguments for treating some of the examples found in the *Balanced Corpus of Estonian* as examples of a slightly different kind – we might refer to them as a subschema or as an extension in respect to the constructional schema X is ADJ V-MAINF. One argument for the existence of a subschema is that the subject tends to be rather different in these examples. The subject of the subschema is not agentive and can easily be interpreted as event-like, even when the NP forming the subject is not an expression of time (for example, *trahv* 'fine' or *raha* 'money' in examples 19 and 20). The verb forming the MA-infinitive is an intransitive verb that usually denotes coming into existence or ceasing to exist. Such verbs preserve the subject's lack of agentiveness. The adjective component specifies the manner of coming into existence or ceasing to exist. Some sentences in the corpus clearly relate to the sensation of passing time (*aastad on kärmed/vihased kuluma* 'years are quick to pass'), and in many cases, we have seen a sort of prediction as to the ease or difficulty with which an event will occur (for example, *trahv on kerge tulema* lit. 'a fine is easy to come'). Though the examples from the corpus are not numerous, they seem to indicate that the meaning and use of the proposed constructional subschema is that it offers a certain possibility to speak of the human experience of time. In some cases, the construction expresses time passing by; in some cases, an event popping into existence – or not. The version of the construction that refers to the passing of time can

be also seen as a variant of the single event version in which the event recurs. Another way to interpret an expression such as *sügis on kiire tulema* 'autumn is quick to come' could be to say that a human experiencer is stationary and the autumn is approaching him/her all too quickly; this would be consistent with the TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT metaphor (Lakoff, Johnsson 1980, 41–43).

As was mentioned previously, it is expected in the cognitive grammarian framework that constructions will have features that are not derivable from their parts and that in forming and understanding complex expressions speakers rely on their imaginative capacities, among other resources (Langacker 2000, 4–5, 22–24; 2008, 170). In the case of the sentences analysed here as belonging to the subschema SÜGIS ON KIIRE TULEMA, there is often no component (subject, copula, adjective or MA-infinitive) that bears any clear semantic relation to the domain of time or points directly to the experience of passing time. By combining these elements, however, the whole construction can produce that effect.

LAIKAS ESTŲ KALBOS KONSTRUKCIJOSE SU BŪDVARDŽIU IR *-ma* BENDRATIMI

Santrauka

Straipsnyje aprašoma estų kalbos konstrukcinė schema (Langacker 2000, 21–22, 32–33; 2008, 168), susidedanti iš būdvardžio ir -ma bendraties (X yra ADJ V-MAINF), pvz.: *Ahv on kiire kaost looma* 'Beždžionė greitai sukuria chaosą' (pažodžiui 'Beždžionė yra greita sukurti chaosą'), *Iga muusikapala lõppedes oli Lili kärme plaksutama* 'Lili skubėjo ploti po kiekvieno muzikos kūrinio' (pažodžiui 'Lili buvo greita ploti po kiekvieno muzikos kūrinio'). Didžiausias dėmesys skiriamas specifiniam konstrukcijos variantui, matomam tokiuose pavyzdžiuose kaip *Sügis on kiire tulema* 'Ruduo greitai ateina' (pažodžiui 'Ruduo yra greitas ateiti'), *Aastad on kärmed kuluma* 'Metai greitai praeina' (pažodžiui 'Metai yra greiti praeiti'), *Petlik mulje on kerge tekkima* 'Galima lengvai susidaryti klaidingą įspūdį' (pažodžiui 'Klaidingas įspūdis yra lengvas atsirasti'), *Trahv on kerge tulema* 'Galima lengvai gauti baudą' (pažodžiui 'Bauda yra lengva ateiti'), *Üksmeel oli neis küsimustes visa tekkima* 'Buvo sunku pasiekti sutarimą šiais klausimais' (pažodžiui 'Sutarimas šiais klausimais buvo užsispyręs atsirasti').

Pagrindinis straipsnio tikslas – aprašyti šį konstrukcijos variantą, pasitelkiant subalansuoto estų kalbos tekstyno duomenis. Šioje poschemėje negyvas subjektas apibūdinamas būdvardžiu, dažniausiai žyminčiu greitumą, lengvumą ar sunkumą, o *-ma* bendratį gauna intranzityvinis egzistencinis veiksmažodis. Būdingi būdvardžiai yra *kerge* 'lengvas', *visa* 'užsispyręs', *kiire* 'greitas', *raske* 'sunkus', o *-ma* bendratį dažniausiai gauna dinaminiai egzistenciniai veiksmažodžiai, žymintys atsiradimą ar nykimą (pvz., *tulema* 'ateiti', *tekkima* 'atsirasti', *kaduma* 'išnykti'). Sujungti kartu, šie komponentai išreiškia tam tikrą spėjimą, kaip lengvai ar sunkiai veiksmas įvyks. Subjektas gali nesunkiai būti interpretuojamas kaip įvykis, pvz., konstrukcijoje *trahv on kerge tulema* (pažodžiui 'bauda yra lengva ateiti') būtent baudos gavimo įvykis įvardijamas kaip galintis nesunkiai nutikti.

Šis specifinis schemos variantas turi keletą ypatybių, nebūdingų bendrajai estų kalbos konstrukcijai su būdvardžiu ir *-ma* bendratimi (X yra ADJ V-MAINF). Bendrajai konstrukcijai dažniausiai būna būdingas žmogų reiškiantis ir agento vaidmenį atliekantis ar žmogaus veikla užsiimantis subjektas, tuo tarpu šiame konstrukcijos variante subjektas yra negyvas ir neatliekantis agento vaidmens. Be to, *-ma* bendratimi reiškiamas veiksmažodis yra egzistencinis, o tai dera su subjekto neagentiškumu. Konstrukcijos varianto egzistavimą užtikrina jo specifinės semantinės charakteristikos ir jis gali būti interpretuojamas kaip bendrosios schemos X yra ADJ V-MAINF plėtinys (L a n g a c k e r 2008, 170; 2000, 12–13). Variantas nėra dažnas tekstyno medžiagoje ir sudaro apie tris procentus X yra ADJ V-MAINF schemos pavyzdžių.

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