

**ONLY IN LITHUANIAN:
AT THE MORPHOLOGY-SYNTAX-SEMANTICS INTERFACE**

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1. The Phenomenon

Two ways of expressing the ‘restrictive’ (König 1991) meaning in Lithuanian:

- particle *tik* ‘only’ immediately preceding the constituent in its scope (1a–c);
- verbal prefix *te-* (2).

(1) a. ***Tik*** *Jon-as* *myl-i* *Aldon-q.*
only J.-NOM.SG love-PRS A.-ACC.SG
‘Only Jonas loves Aldona.’

b. *Jon-as* *myl-i* ***tik*** *Aldon-q.*
J.-NOM.SG love-PRS only A.-ACC.SG
‘Jonas loves only Aldona.’

c. *J-is* *ne* ***tik*** *myl-i,* *bet* *ir* *nor-i* *j-q* *ves-ti.*
3-NOM.SG.M NEG only love-PRS but and want-PRS 3-ACC.SG.F marry-INF
‘He not only loves her, but also wishes to marry her.’ (Google)

(2) *J-is* *te-parod-ė* *j-ai* *savo* *meil-ę.*
3-NOM.SG.M only-show-PST 3-DAT.SG.F his.own love-ACC.SG
‘He only showed her his love.’ (LKT)

- In some contexts, *tik* and *te-* co-occur (3):

(3) *Nejaugi* *vyr-as* *Deivyd-as* ***tik*** *dain-as* *te-padovanoj-o?*
really man-NOM.SG D.-NOM.SG only song-ACC.PL only-give-PST
‘Did David really give <you> only songs?’ (Internet)

In this paper I will focus on the restrictive *te-*, which is peculiar from the points of view of its morphosyntax and scope and has never before been subject to linguistic analysis (the grammars of Lithuanian, e. g. Schleicher 1856: 139; Kurschat 1876: 130; Otrębski 1965: 368–369; Mathiassen 1996: 172; Chicouene, Skūpas 2003: 126–127 give it just a few lines, while Ambrazas (ed.) 1997, the most authoritative grammar written in English, does not mention it at all).

The investigation is based on the following sources of data:

- elicited sentences (thanks go to Valdemaras Klumbys, Vidmantas Kuprevičius & Jurga Narkevičiūtė, Vilnius, for their patience and help);
- the Corpus of Lithuanian Language (LKT, <http://donelaitis.vdu.lt/>);
- Google searches.

2. Morphology

The restrictive *te-* is not a particle or a proclitic, but a prefix. Like other Lithuanian prefixes (lexical aspectual prefixes (4b) or negative prefix (4c)), it triggers the so called **reflexive displacement** (4d), which is impossible with genuine particles (4e):

- (4) a. *džiaug-ti-s* b. *ap-si-džiaug-ti* c. *ne-si-džiaug-ė*
 rejoice-INF-RFL PVB-RFL-rejoice-INF NEG-RFL-rejoice-PST
 'rejoice' 'start rejoicing' 'did not rejoice'
- d. *te-si-džiaug-ė* e. **tik-si-džiaug-ė*
 only-RFL-rejoice-PST
 only+rejoice

te- can also attach to non-verbal predicative elements, such as *galima* 'possible' (5):

- (5) *Mylė-ti vis-us* *te-galima* *myl-i-nt kažk-a.*
 love-INF all-ACC.PL.M only-possible love-PRS-PA someone-ACC.SG
 'It is possible to love everyone only when one loves someone.' (LKT)

☞ A typologically very rare type of marker: according to König (1991: 20), restrictive is almost never expressed affixally.

The only close typological parallel: verbal prefix *-djal-* 'only' in Bininj-Gun-wok (= Mayali, Australia, Evans 1995).

BININJ-GUN-WOK (Gunwingu, Northern Australia; Evans 1995: 250)

- (6) *A-djal-wokdi* *gun-djeihmi.*
 1SG-only-speak language.name
 'I speak only Gun-Djeihmi.'

3. Polyfunctionality

Prefix *te-* is a highly polyfunctional morpheme:

- component of the complex Continuative marker *te-be-* 'still': *te-be-gyvena* 'still lives' (see Mathiassen 1996: 171–172 for a brief description and Arkadiev 2009 for a more detailed analysis);
- marker of the Permissive mood ("3rd person imperative"): *te-myli* 'let him love'.
- Restrictive 'only'.

In all these uses *te-* behaves identically from the morphological point of view, which leads to potential homonymy. In the contexts where ambiguity may arise, the range of interpretations of *te-* is narrowed down:

- *te-* is never used restrictively when combined with *be-*;
- since the Permissive use of *te-* is limited to 3rd person Present and Future, *te-* usually does not have the Restrictive meaning in combination with these forms (7).

- (7) a. *te-vaikščioj-o*
te-stroll-PST
 ‘he/she only strolled’
- b. *te-vaikščioj-u*
te-stroll-PRS.1SG
 ‘I only stroll’
- c. *te-vaikščioj-a*
te-stroll-PRS
 ‘let him/her stroll’ || ??‘he/she only strolls’

- also, for some not yet well understood reason, Restrictive *te-* is altogether incompatible with the Negative prefix *ne-*.

☞ The Bininj-Gun-wok prefix *-djal-* also is polysemous between Restrictive and Continuative: (6) can have the meaning ‘I keep speaking Gun-Djeihmi’. Actually, Evans (1995: 248–249) argues that the Continuative meaning is historically prior. However, it is premature to draw any diachronic conclusions from the apparent parallelism between Lithuanian and Mayali.

4. Scopal properties

Syntactic behaviour of *te-* is similar to that of English *only* (e.g. Dryer 1994)

(8) *John only introduced Bill to Sue.*

- Depending on the intonation, *only* in (8) can be interpreted as taking scope over *Bill*, over *Sue*, or even over the whole VP [*introduced Bill to Sue*].
- Similarly, *te-* is not restricted with respect to its scopal possibilities, and even less so than *only*.

Restrictive *te-* can take scope over:

- ✓ intransitive subjects (9);
- ✓ transitive subjects (10);
- ✓ direct (11a) and indirect (11b) objects;
- ✓ obliques (12) and adverbials (13).

(9) *Te-atėj-o Jon-as.*
only-come-PST J.-NOM.SG
 ‘Only Jonas came.’

(10) *Vos 5 žmon-ės te-paraš-ė komentar-us.*
barely people-NOM.PL only-write-PST comment-ACC.PL
 ‘Just barely five people wrote comments.’ (Internet)

(11) *Kaz-ys mergait-ėms te-dovanoj-o knyg-as.*
K.-NOM.SG girl-DAT.PL only-give-PST book-ACC.PL
 a. ‘Kazys gave books only to girls’ (if stress on *mergaitėms*).
 b. ‘Kazys gave only books to girls’ (if stress on *knygas*).

(12) *Šit-a knyg-a 10 lit-ų te-kainav-o mūsų knygyn-e.*
this-NOM.SG.F book-NOM.SG litas-GEN.PL only-cost-PST our bookstore-LOC.SG
 ‘This book cost 10 litas only in our shop.’

- (13) *J-i neseniai te-pradėj-o galvo-ti apie vaikyst-ę.*
 3-NOM.SG.F recently only-begin-PST think-INF about childhood-ACC.SG
 ‘She only recently started thinking about childhood.’ (LKT)

It has been so far impossible to pin down a single factor determining the scope assignment with *te-*; different speakers show varying preferences w.r.t. intonation and word order (postverbal vs. preverbal vs. clause final position of the focused constituent). It seems that the interpretation of *te-* is ‘parasitic’ on whatever mechanism of focus-assignment which is employed by any particular ‘dialect’ of Lithuanian.

It seems that *tik* can sometimes function as a scope marker (with a possible disambiguating role), cf. (3) and (14). However, native speakers’ judgments vary considerably and corpus data are inconclusive.

- (14) ... *man te-raš-e-i tik raminam-as bendr-as fraz-es.*
 I:DAT only-write-PST-2SG only consolatory-ACC.PL.F general-ACC.PL.F sentence-ACC.PL
 ‘You wrote to me only general consolatory sentences.’ (LKT)

In contrast to Bininj-Gun-wok *-djal-*, Lithuanian *te-* cannot take scope over pronominal agreement markers in the verb, cf. (15) vs. (16):

BININJ-GUN-WOK (Evans 1995: 144)

- (15) *A-marne-djal-djare.*
 1SG-BEN-only-want
 ‘Only I love her/him’ or ‘O love only him/her.’

LITHUANIAN

- (16) **Te-atėj-a-u.*
 only-come-PST-1SG
 *‘Only I came.’

This is obviously related to the fact that Bininj-Gun-wok is a polysynthetic pronominal argument language (Evans 1995: 211 ff.), which property is by no means shared by Lithuanian (though the latter freely allows pro-drop).

Lithuanian *te-* importantly differs from English preverbal *only* in that it can scope over subjects (9), (10), which is impossible for *only*.

5. Embedded scope

The most peculiar characteristic of *te-* is its ability to scope into various kinds of constituents:

- ✓ argument NPs (17);
- ✓ infinitives (18);
- ✓ participial complement clauses (19);
- ✓ finite (subjunctive) subordinate clauses (20).

- (17) *Te-skait-a-u [Maironi-o eilėrašči-us], kit-ų poet-ų ne-mėg-st-u.*
 only-read-PRS-1SG M.-GEN.SG poetry-ACC.PL other-GEN.PL poet-GEN.PL NEG-like-PRS-1SG
 ‘I read only poetry by Maironis, I don’t like other poets’.

- (18) *Kaz-ys te-galėj-o [atsaky-ti i 2 klausim-us].*
 K.-NOM.SG only-can-PST answer-INF in question-ACC.PL
 ‘Kazys could only answer to two questions.’
- (19) *Birut-ė te-sak-ė [5 valand-as pamiegoj-us-i].*
 B.-NOM.SG only-say-PST hour-ACC.PL sleep-PST.PA-NOM.SG.F
 ‘Birute said that she had slept only 5 hours.’
- (20) *Jon-as te-norėj-o, [kad atei-tų Aldon-a].*
 J.-NOM.SG only-want-PST that come-SBJ A.-NOM.SG
 ‘Jonas wanted only Aldona to come.’

However, *te-* cannot scope out of the embedded clause (21).

- (21) *Birut-ė sak-ė [te-pamiegoj-us-i 5 valand-as].*
 B.-NOM.SG say-PST only-sleep-PST.PA-NOM.SG.F hour-ACC.PL
 ‘Birute said that she had slept only 5 hours’ ||
 *‘Only Birute said that she had slept five hours.’

☞ Thus, Restrictive *te-* can serve as a valuable diagnostic of clause boundaries, e.g. in complement constructions headed by participles (22a,b).

- (22) a. *Saki-a-u [Jon-a te-atėj-us].*
 say-PST-1SG J.-ACC.SG only-come-PST.PA
 ‘I said that only Jonas came.’
- b. **Mači-a-u Jon-a [te-atėj-us].*
 see-PST-1SG J.-ACC.SG only-come-PST.PA
 Intended: ‘I saw that only Jonas came.’

7. Towards an analysis

Lithuanian Restrictive *te-* is an unselective operator sensitive to focus structure → an argument for an event-based account of restrictives (Bonomi & Casalegno 1993).

The site of attachment of the Restrictive *te-* is located relatively high in the structure of the clause, cf. its ability to scope over subjects (9), (10), and its behaviour w.r.t. periphrastic verbal forms (23a,b).

- (23) a. *Kaz-ys te-buv-o apsireng-ęs marškini-ais.*
 K.-NOM.SG only-AUX-PST dress-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M shirt-INS.PL
 ‘Kazys was wearing (lit. had put on) only a shirt.’
- b. **Kaz-ys buv-o te-apsireng-ęs marškini-ais.*
 K.-NOM.SG AUX-PST only-dress-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M shirt-INS.PL
 Intended: ‘=(23a)’

The precise architecture of the clause in Lithuanian so far remains unclear, so it would be rather premature to speculate on the precise position of the Restrictive *te-*.

Abbreviations

ACC – accusative, AUX – auxiliary, BEN – benefactive, DAT – dative, F – feminine, GEN – genitive, INF – infinitive, INS – instrumental, LOC – locative, M – masculine, NEG – negation, NOM – nominative, PA – active participle, PL – plural, PRS – present, PVB – pre-verb, PST – past, RFL – reflexive, SBJ – subjunctive, SG – singular

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