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On the aspectual uses of the prefix *be-* in Lithuanian

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The prefix *be-*, which appears in a variety of verbal forms and constructions in Lithuanian, has not been subject to a detailed and theoretically informed synchronic description. This paper attempts to fill this gap by providing an account of the two most clearly identifiable aspectual uses of *be-*: (i) its being part of the periphrastic forms expressing the avertive meaning recently established as a cross-linguistic gram; (ii) its use in the positive and negative continuative forms. I discuss the semantics and use of these constructions, and pay particular attention to their interactions with other aspectually relevant categories of Lithuanian.

Keywords: aspect, prefixation, avertive, continuative, scope

1. Introduction

This paper describes and discusses several aspectual categories of modern Lithuanian whose exponence includes the polyfunctional prefix *be*¹. This prefix appears in a fascinating variety of different constructions and constitutes one of the most typologically peculiar features of the Lithuanian verbal system. However, almost none of its uses have received a systematic, let alone comprehensive, treatment in the existing literature. It is symptomatic that in an extensive survey of Lithuanian verbal prefixation by J. Paulauskas (1958, 321–323), the forms with the prefix *be-* are mentioned only in order to set them aside as not belonging to the category of ‘genuine’ verbal prefixes.

¹ This paper is based on the talk delivered at the *Chronos 9 International conference on tense, aspect and modality* held in Paris in September 2009. I thank my Lithuanian consultants, especially Giedrė Barkauskaitė, Valdemaras Klumbys, Vidmantas Kuprevičius, Rolandas Mikulskas, Jurga Narkevičiūtė, and Jurgis Pakerys, for their invaluable help. I also thank Axel Holvoet, Norbert Ostrowski, Jurgis Pakerys, Björn Wiemer and two anonymous reviewers for their useful comments on the earlier versions of this paper and to Wayles Browne for improving my English and making some useful suggestions. All faults and shortcomings are mine. The research has been financially supported by the Section of History and Philology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

In this paper, I attempt to provide a more detailed analysis of just two of the uses of the prefix *be-*, i. e. those which are most clearly identifiable in terms of both their semantics and their morphosyntax, viz. the aspectual categories I call Avertive (“an action which was potentially imminent but did not ultimately get realized”, Kuteva 2001, 78) and Continuative (“the situation still holds at the reference time”). These categories, which are not very often grammaticalized in the European languages, do not belong to the ‘core’ of the verbal system of Lithuanian, and have not previously been subject to a sufficiently systematic description. However, they are important for a better understanding of the broad range of functions of the prefix *be-* and of the structure of the typologically non-trivial temporal-aspectual system of Lithuanian, as well as for the more general conception of aspectual systems and categories. The main focus of this paper is on the types of interaction of the Avertive and Continuative with other temporal-aspectual categories of Lithuanian, as well as with the lexical aspectual specification of predicates.

The data is taken both from published sources, electronic corpora, most notably the Corpus of Lithuanian Language (LKT; <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/>), and from direct elicitation with native speakers.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 I give a brief outline of the relevant traits of the aspectual system of Lithuanian; in Section 3 the general properties of prefix *be-* are discussed; Section 4 is devoted to the Avertive, and Section 5 discusses the Continuative. In Section 6, brief conclusions are drawn.

2. Overview of the aspectual system of Lithuanian

2.1. Aspectual classes and aspectual derivations

Despite claims by the traditional grammarians (see e. g. Paulauskienė 1979 and Ambrazas, ed., 1997, 234–237), who distinguish between ‘perfective’ and ‘imperfective’ aspects in Lithuanian, in current, especially typologically-oriented, research it is assumed that Lithuanian does not possess a sufficiently grammaticalized category of aspect (see Mathiassen 1996a; Kränzle 1997; Sawicki 2000; Wiemer 2002; Arkadiev 2008, 2011). Though there certainly exists a degree of (often superficial) similarity between Lithuanian verbal system and the

more familiar systems of Slavic languages, instead of a grammatical (morphosyntactic) opposition between two aspects, Lithuanian displays a system of regular correspondences between different lexical aspectual (or rather actional in terms of Tatevosov 2002) classes of predicates, implemented via a set of more or less productive derivational mechanisms (for more extensive argumentation of such a view see in particular Wiemer 2001 and Arkadiev 2008, 2011). Aspectual classes are established on the basis of the interpretations available to the main tenses (Present and Preterite), and can be further sub-divided according to certain properties revealed, *inter alia*, in the derivational potential of the relevant verbs.

For the purposes of the present paper, it is necessary to present just the most important aspectual classes of Lithuanian (see Arkadiev 2011 for a detailed account); they are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Major aspectual classes in Lithuanian

| Class | Present | Simple Past | Examples |
|--|---------|-----------------|---|
| Stative | state | state | <i>gulėti</i> 'lie', <i>laukti</i> 'wait' |
| Processual a. atelic b. inherently telic ² c. multiplicative | process | process | a. <i>suktis</i> 'rotate', <i>kalbėti</i> 'talk' b. <i>rašyti</i> 'write', <i>tirpti</i> 'melt' c. <i>kosėti</i> 'cough', <i>moti</i> 'wave' |
| Telic | process | change of state | <i>atidaryti</i> 'open', <i>mirti</i> 'die' |

² By 'inherently telic' I understand verbs which denote processes potentially culminating in some change of state. As is well known from extensive literature (see e.g. Verkuyl 1972, Krifka 1992, Filip 1999), this property may depend on the presence of an internal argument. For instance, the verb *rašyti* 'write' is inherently telic in the presence of an object NP, e.g. *rašau laišką* 'I am writing a letter', which is signaled by a possibility to 'actualize' the completion of the action by telicizing prefixation: *parašiau laišką* 'I wrote a letter'. In the absence of such an object, this verb is inherently atelic, denoting a mere process without any non-arbitrary endpoint; this time, telicizing prefixation is infelicitous.

Continuation of Table 1

| Class | Present | Simple Past | Examples |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Punctual a. without a presupposed process b. with a presupposed process ³ | habitual or praesens historicum, *process | change of state | a. <i>rasti</i> ‘find’, <i>susirgti</i> ‘fall ill’ b. <i>parašyti</i> ‘write to completion’, <i>ištirpti</i> ‘melt away’ |
| Inchoative | state | change of state, state | <i>patikti</i> ‘like’, <i>suprasti</i> ‘understand’ |

The relevant aspectual derivations in Lithuanian include the following:

(i) ‘telicizing’ prefixation, which turns inherently telic processual verbs into punctual verbs denoting the natural endpoint of the process (see Armoškaitė 2006, *inter alia*), cf. *rašyti* ‘write’ ~ *pa-rašyti* ‘write to completion’;

(ii) punctual prefixation, turning stative and processual verbs into verbs denoting entry into the state or process expressed by the corresponding simple verb, cf. *sirgti* ‘be ill’ ~ *su-sirgti* ‘become ill’;

(iii) **semelfactive prefixation or suffixation, which turns verbs denoting multiplicative processes (i.e. processes consisting of a series of subevents of the same type) into predicates expressing a single subevent or quantum of such a process**, cf. *kosėti* ‘cough repeatedly’ ~ *su-kosėti* ‘give a cough’; *knarkti* ‘snore’ ~ *knarktelėti* ‘give a snore’;

(iv) Iterative suffixation (Geniušienė 1997, 238–240), which can be applied to almost any verb yielding a predicate of the Processual class expressing an indefinite repetition of the event denoted by the base, cf. *atidaryti langą* ‘open a window’ ~ *atidar-inė-ti langus* ‘to open windows one after another’.

³ The crucial difference between verbs I call ‘telic’ and those I call ‘punctual with a presupposed process’ lies in the fact that only the former, but not the latter, are able to express the process leading to the change of state by means of their Present tense form, cf. *žmogus miršta* ‘the man is dying’ vs. *#ledas ištirpsta* which cannot mean ‘the ice is melting’ but only ‘ice melts’.

These as well as a number of less productive derivational mechanisms allow Lithuanian to express quite fine-grained aspectual distinctions, and compensates for the lack of an inflectional perfective vs. imperfective dichotomy.

2.2. Inflectional and periphrastic aspectual categories

In addition to the rich system of aspectual derivations briefly outlined in the preceding section, Lithuanian has a number of inflectional and periphrastic constructions also expressing aspectual meanings. These include the Habitual Past with the suffix *-dav-* (sometimes called Frequentative, see Mathiassen 1996a, 9–10; Sližienė 1995, 224; Geniušienė 1997, 230–232; Roszko & Roszko 2006), cf. ex. (1) from Geniušienė (1997, 231).

- (1) a. *Jon-as atvažiav-o pas tėv-us.*
 John-NOM.SG come-PST to parent-ACC.PL
 ‘John came to his parents.’
- b. *Jon-as dažnai atvažiuo-dav-o pas tėv-us.*
 John-NOM.SG often come-HAB-PST to parent-ACC.PL
 ‘John used to often visit his parents.’

Among the periphrastic aspectual constructions, the Perfect/Resultative is most prominent (see Geniušienė & Nadjalkov 1988; Sližienė 1995, 224–227). It is formed by the Active or Passive Past Participle combined with the relevant tense form of the auxiliary *būti* ‘be’ (in the Present tense, the auxiliary is often omitted). With punctual and telic verbs, these forms are ambiguous between the Perfect (i. e. an event relevant at the reference time) and the Resultative (i. e. a state caused by the event denoted by the verb) interpretations. This is shown in the translations of ex. (2a) and (2b) from Geniušienė & Nadjalkov (1988, 370), illustrating the Active version of the Present and the Past Perfect/Resultative, respectively.

- (2) a. *J-is (yra) šiltai*
 3-NOM.SG.M AUX.PRS.3 warmly
ap-si-reng-ęs.
 PRV-RFL-dress-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M
 ‘He has dressed himself warmly / is dressed warmly.’

- b. *J-is* **buvo** *šiltai*
 3-NOM.SG.M AUX-PST warmly
ap-si-reng-ęs.
 PRV-RFL-dress-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M
 ‘He had dressed himself warmly / was dressed warmly.’

Among the non-derivational aspectual categories in Lithuanian, two are the main focus of this paper. These are the Avertive and the Continuative, which will be briefly introduced below and discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

The Avertive is a periphrastic construction employing the Present Active Participle obligatorily prefixed with the prefix *be-* (hereafter consistently glossed CNT just for the sake of unity) and the Past form of the auxiliary *būti* ‘to be’. The traditional Lithuanian term for these constructions is *sudėtiniai pradėtiniai laikai*, i. e. ‘compound inceptive tenses’ (Dambriūnas 1960, 103–108; Sližienė 1961; Ulvydas, red., 1971, 145–148; Petronienė 2009); in the literature published in English or German, these forms are usually, though largely misleadingly, called Continuative (e. g. Sližienė 1995, 227–228); Mathiassen (1996a, 8–9) has proposed a more adequate, though rather clumsy term ‘Thwarted Inceptive’. I consider the term Avertive to be most suitable for this form, for reasons which will be stated in section 4. A naturally occurring example of the use of the Avertive is shown in (3).

- (3) *Skubiai* *už-si-met-ė* *rūb-q* *ir* **buvo**
 hurriedly PRV-RFL-throw-PST clothes-ACC.SG and AUX-PST
be-iš-ein-a-nt-i, *tačiau* *pri.si.min-ė,*
 CNT-PRV-GO-PRS-PA-NOM.SG.F but recall-PST
k-o *čia* *at-ėj-us-i.*
 what-GEN. SG here PRV-GO-PST.PA-NOM.SG.F
 ‘She hurriedly slipped the clothes over her and was about
 to go, but remembered what she had come here for.’ (LKT)

The Continuative is, by contrast, a synthetic inflectional form built with the aid of two complex prefixes: *te-be-*, marking the Positive Continuative (‘still V’), ex. (4a), and *ne-be-*, marking the Negative Continuative (‘no more V’), ex. (4b).

- (4) a. ... *miestel-yje* *te-be-gyven-o* *daug* *našli-ų*.
small.town-LOC.SG POS-CNT-live-PST many widow-GEN.PL
 ‘... many widows were still living in the town.’ (LKT)
- b. *Tada j-is* *jau* *ne-be-gyven-o* *su*
then 3-NOM.SG.M already NEG-CNT-live-PST with
žmon-a...
wife-INS.SG
 ‘Then he was already no longer living with his wife...’ (LKT)

In the further sections I will present a more detailed description and discussion of the Avertive and the Continuative, but first it is necessary to give a more general outline of the behaviour of the prefix *be-* itself.

3. The general properties of the prefix *be-*

Below I review some of the more general properties of the prefix *be-* and its many uses. The discussion in this section is rather sketchy, partly because the prefix in question is not sufficiently documented.

Together with two other prefixes, *te-* ‘permissive / restrictive’ and *ne-* ‘negative’, *be-* belongs to the class of non-derivational prefixes of Lithuanian. The etymological origins of *be-* are rather obscure (for a variety of mostly speculative opinions see Vaillant 1947; Fraenkel 1962, 38; Zinkevičius 1981, 195–196; Smoczyński 2007, 51), but it is clear that they must have been quite different from those of the derivational prefixes, whose main function is telicization (see section 2.1). In contrast to the derivational prefixes, which normally do not stack, *be-* freely attaches both to unprefixed (*rašė* ‘s/he wrote’ ~ *be-rašė*) and prefixed (*per-rašė* ‘s/he rewrote’ ~ *be-per-rašė*) verbs, in the latter case occupying the position to the left of the derivational prefix. Ostrowski (submitted) traces prefixal *be-* back to the adverb *be* ‘yet, still’ attested in early Lithuanian texts, but it remains unclear whether this hypothesis can account for all uses of this prefix.

That *be-* is indeed a prefix and not a proclitic or a particle (*contra* e. g. Senn 1966, 245) is shown by the behaviour of the reflexive verbs with the ‘mobile’ reflexive affix *-s(i)* (Stolz 1989). With prefixless verbs, the reflexive surfaces as a suffix attaching after the inflectional desinences (*džiaugė-si* ‘s/he rejoiced’), whereas when a prefix is attached, the reflexive appears in the position between the prefix and the stem.

This ‘reflexive displacement’ happens with the derivational prefixes (*ap-si-džiaugė* ‘s/he started rejoicing’) as well with the inflectional prefixes including *be-* (*be-si-džiaugė*)⁴.

The range of uses of *be-* is quite broad, and it is doubtful that they can be synchronically related to each other in a non-controversial way (for some hypotheses see Ostrowski to appear, Ostrowski submitted). In addition to the uses of *be-* in Avertive and Continuative forms focussed upon here, several other uses need to be mentioned.

(i) The ‘emphatic’ use, which occurs mainly with Present Active Participles and whose exact semantic contribution is very hard to determine. Cf. the following two characteristic examples taken from the literary version of the folktale *Eglė žalčių karalienė* (*Egle the Queen of Serpents*). In (5) the prefix participates in the formation of the ‘mirative’ evidential construction involving a participle used instead of a finite predicate⁵; in (6) the prefix is attached to the participle heading a participial complement construction (see Arkadiev to appear).

- (5) *Žiūr-i jauniausi-oji Egl-ė — j-os*
 look-PRS youngest-NOM.SG.F.DEF Egle-NOM.SG 3-GEN.SG.F
rūb-uose žalt-ys be-gul-įs.
 clothes-LOC.PL grass.snake-NOM.SG CNT-lie-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M
 ‘The youngest, Egle, looks, and behold! there is a grass snake
 in her clothes.’

- (6) *...gegut-ė j-iems kukuo-ja netikr-q*
 cuckoo-NOM.SG 3-DAT.PL.M cuckoo-PRS fake-ACC.SG
nuotak-q be-vež-a-nt ...
 bride-ACC.SG CNT-carry-PRS-PA
 ‘... the cuckoo says (lit. cuckoos) to them that they are carrying a fake bride’.⁶

⁴ The presence of *be-* (or, for that matter, of other non-derivational prefixes) does not affect the position of the reflexive when the verbal form already contains a derivational prefix, cf. *be-ap-si-imi* ‘be + undertake’.

⁵ See Wiemer (2006) and Holvoet (2007, Ch 4) on evidentiality in Lithuanian.

⁶ As Norbert Ostrowski points out, ex. (6) could actually be subsumed under the ‘progressive’ use of *be-* discussed below. However, the difference between examples like (6) and those like (7b) is that with the former the presence of the prefix does not seem to affect the interpretation of the whole sentence, its use being (almost) redundant.

(ii) The ‘progressive’ use, which also occurs exclusively with non-finite forms, but whose semantic contribution is easier to capture: *be-* signals that the non-finite predication denotes the background situation which is ongoing when some other situation (normally a punctual event) occurs. Cf. the following pair of corpus examples: in (7a) the Participle without *be-* is used in the logical rather than temporal function, while in (7b) *be-* seems to highlight the temporal coincidence meaning.

(7) a. *ties-a* *pasiiek-ia-m-a* *tik* *steb-i-nt*
 truth-NOM.SG reach-PRS-PP-NOM.SG.F only observe-PRS-PA
ar eksperimentuoj-a-nt, o ne vien tikėjim-u...
 or experiment-PRS-PA but not just belief-INS.SG
 ‘Truth is attainable only by observing and experimenting,
 not by mere belief...’ (LKT)

b. *Gal-i bū-ti taip, jog be-eksperimentuoj-a-nt*
 can-PRS be-INF so that CNT-experiment-PRS-PA
su-deg-s *visk-as, k-as* *numaty-t-a.*
 PRV-burn-FUT all-NOM what-NOM plan-PST.PP-DF
 ‘It can be so that while one is experimenting everything
 that had been planned will burn down.’ (LKT)

This rather restricted use of *be-* is probably related (though in a not completely understood fashion, see Ostrowski, submitted) to the ‘emphatic’ and the Continuative uses and, as will be shown in section 4, is relevant for the understanding of the origins of the Avertive.

(iii) The ‘modal’ use, rather peculiar for a verbal prefix: *be-* indicates that the speaker evaluates the probability of the situation denoted by the predicate occurring in the real world as rather low. In this function *be-* mostly appears in rhetorical questions, protases of hypothetical conditionals and other non-affirmative contexts, cf. (8).

(8) *Abejoj-u,* *ar j-i* *be-kalbė-s* *su*
 doubt-PRS.1SG Q 3-NOM.SG.F CNT-talk-FUT with
man-im atvirai...
 I-INS openly
 ‘I doubt whether she would speak with me openly (at all)...’
 (LKT)

(iv) The ‘universal’ use in the presence of *wh*-words, creating free relative clauses with a concessive meaning (this use is briefly discussed in Drotvinas 1963), cf. (9).

- (9) ...*kur pasaul-yje be-gyven-a-u, visur*
 where world-LOC.SG CNT-live-PST-1SG everywhere
jauči-a-u-si tik pakeliui...
 feel-PST-1SG-RFL only on.the.way
 ‘wherever I lived in the world, everywhere I felt myself being
 only on the way...’ (LKT)

(v) The ‘low degree’ use, when *be-* focuses on the co-occurring expression of some low degree or quantity and introduces a flavour of the speaker’s emotional involvement with this fact, cf. (10).

- (10) *Lietuviškai be-kalbėj-o tik kaim-o varguomen-ė.*
 in.Lithuanian CNT-talk-PST only village-GEN.SG poor-NOM.SG
 ‘Only the poor peasants spoke Lithuanian.’ (LKT)

(vi) The ‘dummy’ use with reflexive participles: since the prefix triggers the abovementioned ‘reflexive displacement’, its attachment allows speakers to avoid the morphophonological complications arising when the reflexive marker combines with the adjectival desinence, cf. (11).

- (11) a. *juok-iqs-is*
 laugh-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M-RFL
 ‘the one who laughs’
 b. *be-si-juok-ia-nči-o // # juokiančiosi*
 CNT-RFL-laugh-PRS-PA-GEN.SG.M
 ‘of the one who laughs’

All the uses of *be-* briefly reviewed above require further investigation and will not be further discussed in this paper (with the exception of (ii) ‘progressive’). It must be noted that while the Avertive is recognized as belonging to the system of ‘compound tenses’ of standard Lithuanian and thus treated in standard grammars, the other uses of *be-* have received very little attention from linguists and are barely mentioned in existing grammars of Lithuanian (cf. Schleicher 1856, 305–306; Kurschat 1876, 130; Otrębski 1965, 368–369; Senn 1966, 245; Ulvydas, red., 1971, 295; Mathiassen 1996b, 171–172; Chicouene,

Skūpas 2003, 126; Ambrazas, ed., 1997, 399, *nebe-* only). Notably, A. Paulauskienė in her (1979) book specifically devoted to the definition, structure and status of grammatical categories of the Lithuanian verb does not even mention the various uses of *be-*, despite the obvious fact that it is precisely this polyfunctional prefix rather than the more Slavic-type derivational aspectual prefixes which constitutes the typological peculiarity of Lithuanian.

4. The Avertive

The term Avertive was proposed by Kuteva (1998; 2001, Ch. 4) for a gram type describing “an action which was potentially imminent but did not ultimately get realized” (Kuteva 2001, 78). Avertive is well attested cross-linguistically, including some European languages. A paradigm example comes from French, where a specialized construction involving the auxiliary *faillir* ‘fail’ plus the Infinitive is used in this function, cf. (12):

(12) ... *et ça a failli amener une rupture entre ma femme et moi.*

French

‘...and this almost brought about a break-up between my wife and myself.’ (Guy de Maupassant. *Bel ami*, 15)

Lithuanian data has not been considered in Kuteva’s cross-linguistic discussion of the Avertive, though the construction shown in (3) above and in numerous examples below is a good and not entirely trivial representative of this cross-linguistic gram. In the next subsections I will describe the morphosyntactic properties of the Lithuanian Avertive and its behaviour in combinations with various aspectual classes.

4.1. Morphosyntactic properties of the Avertive

As has been mentioned above, the auxiliary *būti* ‘be’ appears in the Past tense in the Avertive. This is consistent with the essential characteristics of this gram pointed out by Kuteva (2001: 84): *imminence*, *pastness*, *counterfactuality*. Actually, the Avertive construction allows the auxiliary to appear not only in the Simple Past, but, at least marginally, in the Habitual Past, too; the latter is exemplified in (13).

- (13) *Kai j-ie atei-dav-o mūs-ų kvies-ti,*
 when 3-NOM.PL.M COME-HAB-PST WE-GEN invite-INF
mes jau bū-dav-o-me be-ein-q
 we.NOM already AUX-HAB-PST-1PL CNT-go-PRS.PA.NOM.PL.M
iš nam-ų.
 from home-GEN.PL
 ‘When they would come to invite us, we would be already
 leaving home.’ (Slizienė 1995, 228)

Other tenses on the auxiliary, e.g. the Present tense, are prohibited in the Avertive, cf. the ungrammatical (14):

- (14) **Jon-as yra be-atidar-qš*
 John-NOM.SG AUX.PRS.3 CNT-open-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M
lang-q.
 window-ACC.SG
 intended: ‘John is almost opening the window.’

The grammars, e.g. Ambrazas (ed. 1997), give examples like the following, where the auxiliary occurs in the Future (15) or in the Irrealis/ Subjunctive (16). However, these and similar examples are judged as obsolete by the native speakers, and anyway they do not convey the Avertive meaning, expressing instead some kind of emphasis on the duration of the situation (cf. also Petit 1999, 123).

- (15) *Aš bū-si-u be-mieg-qš, kai*
 I.NOM AUX-FUT-1 CNT-sleep-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M when
atei-s-i man-ęs guld-y-ti.
 come-FUT-2SG I-GEN put.to.bed-INF
 ‘I’ll be sleeping when you come to put me to bed.’ (Ambrazas,
 ed., 1997, 250)

- (16) *K-o j-is lauk-ė ši-o laik-o*
 what-GEN 3-NOM.M wait-PST this-GEN.M time-GEN
nevedęs, bū-tų be-tur-įs
 unmarried AUX-IRR.3 CNT-have-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M
šeiminink-ę!
 housewife-ACC.SG
 ‘Why did he wait so long and not marry, he would have a
 housewife now!’ (ibid., 258)

Such ‘progressive’ uses of the construction with the *be* + Active Present Participle are marginally attested even with the Past tense of the auxiliary, especially when the base verb is stative, cf. (17).

- (17) *J-is dar buv-o be-mieg-qs, taigi*
 3-NOM.SG.M still AUX-PST CNT-sleep-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M SO
at-si-sėd-o-m ...
 PRV-RFL-sit-PST-1PL
 ‘He was still sleeping, so we sat down ...’⁷

However, such peripheral and nearly obsolete uses of the construction can shed light on the historical origins of the Avertive. The latter arose as a specific development of the Progressive construction similar to that in (17), which is more widely attested in the older Lithuanian texts and is reported to be still in use in the Western Lithuanian dialects (see Ambrazas 1990, 180–181). The construction often appeared in contexts where some event ‘interrupts’ the ongoing situation denoted by the Progressive form (i. e. in the ‘focalized progressive’ contexts, see Bertinetto *et al.* 2000, 517), cf. an Old Lithuanian example (18).

- (18) *Tawa tarn-as buw-a be-gan-ans*
 your servant-NOM.SG AUX-PST CNT-pasture-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M
aw-is sawa Tiew-o, ir ateij-a Lėw-as.
 sheep-ACC.PL his father-GEN and come-PST lion-NOM.SG
 ‘Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep, and a lion came...’ (Bretke’s 1579–1590 translation of Luther’s Bible, Sam. 17.34, cited after Ambrazas 1990, 181)

It is possible that the avertive meaning of the construction arose due to the conventionalization of interruption implicature found in (18) and similar examples. Such a diachronic path is actually argued for by the traditional grammars, see e.g. Sližienė (1961). This hypothesis can be corroborated by the rather rare contemporary examples like (19), where the processual inherently telic verb phrase *eiti į savo kambarį*

⁷ <http://road.lt/2007/03/15/kaip-as-autostopinau-i-italija/>; an anonymous reviewer points out that this sentence actually conveys the continuative semantics, rather than the pure progressive; however, here the continuative meaning is due to the presence of the adverb *dar* ‘still’; the periphrastic construction itself, as ex. (15) suggests, does not express the continuative per se.

‘go to one’s own room’ appears in the construction denoting a process interrupted without having attained its goal.

- (19) *Pon-as Kalvait-is buv-o be-ein-qs*
 mister-NOM.SG K.-NOM.SG AUX-PST CNT-GO-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M
į savo kamar-į antr-ame viešbuči-o
 in self’s room-ACC.SG second-LOC.SG.M hotel-GEN.SG
aukšt-e, bet kažkodėl netrukus grįžt-a
 floor-LOC.SG but for.some.reason soon return-PRS
atgal.
 back
 ‘Mr. Kalvaitis left to go (lit. was going) to his room on the
 second floor of the hotel, but soon comes back.’ (LKT)

4.2. Interaction of the Avertive with aspectual classes

When combining with verbs of different actional classes, the Lithuanian Avertive can yield two types of meaning, focussing either on the preparatory stage of the event or on the process leading to culmination, cf. similar behaviour of the English adverbial *almost*, see e. g. Dowty (1979, 241–244). The distribution of these interpretations over aspectual classes of verbs is summarized in Table 2 and is illustrated by examples (20)–(27).

Table 2. Interaction of Avertive with actional classes

| Aspectual class | Interpretation of the Avertive | No. of ex. |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Stative | (preparatory stage) | (20) |
| Processual, type a | preparatory stage | (21) |
| Processual, type b | preparatory stage | (22) |
| Punctual, type a | preparatory stage | (23) |
| Punctual, type b | process | (24), (25) |
| Telic | process | (26), (27) |

Stative⁸:

- (20) *Aš buv-a-u be-klaus-a-nt-i muzik-os,*
 I.NOM AUX-PST-1SG CNT-listen-PRS-PA-NOM.SG.F music-GEN.SG
kai kiem-e pasigird-o triukšm-as.
 when yard-LOC.SG be.heard-PST noise-NOM.SG
 ‘I was just going to listen to music when some noise came
 from the yard.’

Processual, inherently atelic:

- (21) *J-is atsitrauk-ė nuo lentyn-os, jau buv-o*
 3-NOM.SG.M recede-PST from shelf-GEN.SG already AUX-PST
be-bėg-ąs, bet stabtelėj-o.
 CNT-run-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M but stop-PST
 ‘He stepped back from the shelf and was already going to
 run away, but suddenly stopped.’ (LKT)

Processual, inherently telic:

- (22) *Buv-a-u be-raš-ąs komentar-ą bet*
 AUX-PST-1SG CNT-write-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M comment-ACC.SG but
per-skait-ęs jūs-ų mint-is
 PRV-read-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M YOU.PL-GEN thought-ACC.PL
su.prat-a-u, kad geriau ne-pa-saky-si-u...
 understand-PST-1SG that better NEG-PRV-say-FUT-1SG
 ‘I was going to write a comment, but having read your
 thoughts I understood that I couldn’t say it better...’⁹

Punctual without a presupposed process:

⁸ It must be noted that the very appearance of stative verbs in the Avertive construction is quite marginal. Though ex. (20) was accepted by several native speakers, I could not find similar examples in the corpus. All examples of the Past Auxiliary + *be* + Present Active Participle construction with stative verbs I could find on the internet yielded the progressive, as in ex. (17), rather than the avertive interpretation. It should be also kept in mind, that, as Wayles Browne kindly pointed out to me, examples like (17) and (20) involve agentive statives bordering on processual verbs; not surprisingly, predicates denoting ‘classic’ states like ‘hear’, ‘know’, ‘exist’ etc. are semantically incompatible with the Avertive.

⁹ <http://www.lrytas.lt/?id=11714605141170042357&view=9&p=2>

- (23) — *Man čia patink-a, — pagaliau, kai jau*
 I.DAT here like-PRS finally when already
buv-a-u be-užmiršt-qs mūs-ų
 AUX-PST-1SG CNT-forget-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M WE-GEN
buvim-q, pasak-ė, — bet...
 existence-ACC.SG say-PST but
 ‘I like it here, — he said finally, when I was already on the
 verge of forgetting about our existence, — but...’ (LKT)

Punctual with a presupposed process derived from telic processual,
 cf. (22):

- (24) *Aš buv-a-u be-pa-raš-qs tau*
 I.NOM AUX-PST-1SG CNT-PRV-write-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M YOU.DAT
laišk-q, kai baig-ė-si rašal-as.
 letter-ACC.SG when end-PST-RFL ink-NOM.SG
 ‘I had almost finished the letter to you when the ink ran out.’
- (25) *Tai aišku tamsu — saul-ė jau buv-o*
 well of.course dark SUN-NOM.SG already AUX-PST
be-nusileidž-ia-nt-i!
 CNT-descend-PRS-PA-NOM.SG.F
 ‘Well, of course it was dark — the sun had almost set by
 that time!’¹⁰

Telic:

- (26) *Penkt-q valand-q Jon-as buv-o*
 fifth-ACC.SG hour-ACC.SG Jonas-NOM.SG AUX-PST
be-parein-qs namo, kai j-am
 CNT-return-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M home when 3-DAT.SG.M
paskambin-o iš darb-o.
 call-PST from work-GEN

¹⁰ <http://fotokudra.lt/img.php?img=239215>; as an anonymous reviewer rightly points out, this example shows that the Avertive construction can actually denote not just the purely avertive meaning (implying that the imminent event did not occur in reality after all), but also the more general proximative meaning (‘the event is on the verge of happening’) not implying anything particular about the occurrence or non-occurrence of the situation in the real world. I have not systematically studied such uses of the construction, but it seems that they are more or less marginal.

‘At five o’clock John had almost come home, but someone called him from the office.’ (the call came when John was close to his home)

- (27) *Jau buv-a-u be-atidar-qs automobili-o*
 already AUX-PST-1SG CNT-open-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M CAR-GEN.SG
dur-is, kai man-e pa-šauk-ė.
 door-ACC.PL when I-ACC PRV-call-PST
 ‘I had already almost opened the doors of the car when
 someone called me.’ (LKT)

The Lithuanian Avertive is interesting in that it groups together verbs of ‘opposite’ actional properties: verbs denoting durative situations, on the one hand, and verbs expressing spontaneous momentary events, on the other, both show the preparatory stage interpretation of the Avertive. Such a distribution, however, seems to naturally follow from the general meaning of the Avertive and the aspectual properties of the respective verbs. The Avertive denotes an imminent event which did not happen, and this event is either the endpoint of a telic situation like ‘return’ (26), ‘open’ (27), or ‘write up’ (24), or the starting point of a durative situation like ‘run’ (21) or ‘be engaged in writing’ (22). However, in order for a verb to yield the process interpretation of the Avertive, it must be able to denote a ‘real’, lexically specified endpoint, such as with *pareiti* ‘return’ in (26), not a ‘virtual’ one, like with the inherently telic processual verbs such as ‘write’ in (22). The fact that the inherently atelic and inherently telic processual verbs yield identical interpretations in the Avertive (disregarding the more or less marginal examples like (19) above) is a strong argument for treating the two kinds of Lithuanian processual verbs as belonging to the same aspectual class.

To conclude the discussion of the Lithuanian Avertive, it is an example of a gram type only recently recognized in the theory and typology of tense-aspect, and it is interesting both for its morphosyntactic structure and possible grammaticalization history, and because it reveals important distinctions in the aspectual classification of Lithuanian verbs.

5. Continuative

Continuative forms have a complex meaning consisting of a presupposition ‘the situation was holding at a certain point in time before the reference time’ and an assertion ‘the situation is holding at the reference time’ (cf. van der Auwera 1998, 39–40); in the more familiar European languages this kind of meaning is expressed either by adverbial elements like *still* (see van der Auwera 1998; Krifka 2000) or by periphrastic constructions with verbs such as *continue* (see Mortier 2010)¹¹. Strictly speaking, such semantics belong not to the aspect proper, but to an independent category of ‘phase’ (Plungian 1999). However, the discussion of Continuative in connection with aspect is justified, because, first, phasal meanings, and especially that of continuation, are very close to the aspectual ones (see in particular Bybee *et al.* 1994, 127, 164–174) on the relation between Continuative and Progressive), and, second, the Lithuanian Continuative is very instructive from the point of view of its interaction with aspectual classes and other verbal forms and constructions. As I have already said above, the Lithuanian Continuative has been virtually undescribed and unnoticed, so this section of my paper contributes to the mere documentation of Lithuanian.

5.1. Morphosyntactic properties

There are two kinds of Continuative in Lithuanian: the Continuative proper, or positive Continuative, formed with the complex prefix *te-be-*, and the negative Continuative, or Discontinuative¹², whose exponent is the complex prefix *ne-be-* (see Ostrowski 2010). As I will show below, though at first sight it seems that the formal make-up of these categories is straightforward, the positive and negative versions of the Lithuanian Continuative are not compositionally derived from *te-* resp. *ne-* + *be-*. There are several facts pointing in this direction.

First, *te-* and *ne-* are not parallel, in that while *ne-* is a general negative marker in Lithuanian, *te-* has a meaning of positive polarity

¹¹ Strictly speaking, Lithuanian uses these more familiar means of expression of the continuative meaning as well; in this paper, I will focus only on the morphological markers of continuative semantics, leaving the relation between them and the lexical continuative expressions for future research.

¹² The terminology is based on van der Auwera (1998, 35).

only in combination with *be-*. In its independent uses, *te-* expresses either permissive modality or a restrictive meaning ‘only’, cf. Arkadijev (2010). It is not at all obvious how these meanings can be related to the semantics of positive polarity found in *te-be-* (on the origins of *te-be-* see Ostrowski to appear).

Second, the *be-* found in the Continuative forms cannot be identified on synchronic grounds with any of the other uses of *be-* listed in section 3. Though the Continuative *be-* is most probably historically related to the Avertive, Progressive and ‘emphatic’ varieties of this multifaceted prefix, their mutual relations are complex and not entirely clear. The purely Continuative uses of *be-* were attested in older texts, see Ostrowski (to appear), but are now almost obsolete: this prefix on its own does not normally denote mere continuity in the contemporary language and cannot be used as a synonym of *tebe-*.

Third, as we will see below, the behaviour of the positive and the negative versions of the Continuative is not exactly parallel, and this divergence cannot be reduced (at least synchronically) to a mere difference in polarity.

All this points towards an analysis of the Lithuanian Continuative and Discontinuative expressions as ‘morphological idioms’ rather than compositional sequences of morphemes with clearly identifiable and independently attested functions. In spite of that, for the sake of a unified representation of *be-*, in the presentation of examples I will still treat *tebe-* and *nebe-* as combinations of morphemes.

Let’s now turn to other formal properties of the Lithuanian Continuative. Both positive and negative versions of the Continuative show limited transcategoriality, being able to attach not only to verbs, but also to adjectives in predicative (28), (29) and attributive (30) functions.

- (28) ... *Brigitte Bardot mit-as te-be-gyv-as.*
 myth-NOM.SG POS-CNT-alive-NOM.SG.M
 ‘... the myth of Brigitte Bardot is still alive.’ (LKT)

- (29) *Tačiau buv-im-as čia nusistovė-jo*
 however be-NML-NOM.SG here become-PST
iš ties-ų ne-be-sald-us.
 from truth-GEN.PL NEG-CNT-SWEET-NOM.SG.M
 ‘However, staying here became indeed no longer pleasant.’
 (LKT)

- (30) *Men-q galima kur-ti iš panaudot-ų ir*
 art-ACC.SG possible create-INF from utilized-GEN.PL and
civilizacij-os progres-ui ne-be-aktuali-ų
 civilization-GEN.SG progress-DAT.SG NEG-CNT-urgent-GEN.PL
medžiag-ų ir gamini-ų.
 material-GEN.PL and article-GEN.PL
 ‘Objects of art can be created out of already-used materials
 and articles no longer relevant for the progress of civiliza-
 tion.’ (LKT)

Despite this, with verbs *te-be-* and *ne-be-* behave as ordinary prefixes and not as proclitics or particles, triggering the ‘reflexive displacement’, cf. *te-be-si-džiaugė* ‘s/he still rejoiced’, *ne-be-si-džiaugė* ‘s/he no more rejoiced’. However, in addition to a complex prefix *ne-be-*, there exists a particle *nebe* with roughly the same meaning (*te-be-* lacks a corresponding particle-like version). It is written separately and attaches to words of any class, cf. (31a), where *nebe* appears before a locative NP. Note that in a nearly synonymous (31b) with *nebe-* prefixed to the verb, the latter exhibits an idiosyncratic morphophonological truncation of the initial vowel, which again suggests that with verbs *tebe-* and *nebe-* are prefixes.

- (31) a. *Es-u Indij-oje, jau nebe Tibet-e.*
 be-PRS-1SG India-LOC.SG already no.more Tibet-LOC.SG
 ‘I am in India, not in Tibet any more.’ (LKT)
- b. *Ne-be-s-u Tibet-e.*
 NEG-CNT-be-PRS-1SG Tibet-LOC.SG
 ‘I am no longer in Tibet.’

According to Ostrowski (submitted), this particle is a direct continuation of the now obsolete Old Lithuanian adverbial particle *be* ‘yet, still’ combined with negation; this adverbial element, as has been already mentioned, is speculated to constitute the source of the prefix *be-* itself. The exact stages of this development, however, are yet to be investigated.

5.2. Co-occurrence with non-finite and periphrastic verbal forms

Both positive and negative Continuative prefixes freely attach to various non-finite forms such as Infinitive (32), attributive participle (33), predicative participle in Nominative plus Participle (34a), Accusative plus Participle (34b), and Dative plus Participle (35) constructions, and to the Converb (36). However, Continuative is disallowed with action nominalizations (37), which suggests that the latter have a structure different from other non-finite forms.

- (32) *Nė kart-o ne-su-abejo-ja-u dėl savo
not.even time-GEN NEG-PRV-doubt-PST-1SG because self's
apsisprendim-o ne-be-dalyvau-ti rinkim-uose.
determination-GEN NEG-CNT-participate-INF election-LOC.PL
'I have never cast doubt on my determination to no more
participate in the elections.'* (LKT)

- (33) ... *tai stipr-us sukrėtim-as dar
this strong-NOM.SG.M shock-NOM.SG still
te-be-gyven-a-nt-iems prieškari-o
POS-CNT-live-PRS-PA-DAT.PL.M pre.war-GEN.SG
karinink-ams.
military.officer-DAT.PL
'... this is a strong shock for the still-living military officers
from the pre-war times.'* (LKT)

- (34) a. *Kaz-ys sak-ė te-be-gyven-ąs
Kazys-NOM.SG say-PST POS-CNT-live-PRS.PA.NOM.SG.M
Šiauli-uose.
Šiauliai-LOC.PL
'Kazys said that was still living in Šiauliai.'*

- b. *Žin-a-u Kaz-į ne-be-gyven-a-nt
know-PRS-1 Kazys-ACC.SG NEG-CNT-live-PRS-PA
Šiauli-uose.
Šiauliai-LOC.PL
'I know that Kazys does not live in Šiauliai any more.'*

- (35) *Tok-s* *priežod-is* *buv-o*
 such-NOM.SG saying-NOM.SG AUX-PST
paplit-ęs *Rom-oje* *dar*
 spread-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M Rome-LOC.SG still
te-be-gyven-a-nt *ši-am* *filosof-ui*
 POS-CNT-live-PRS-PA this-DAT.SG.M philosopher-DAT.SG
patriot-ui.
 patriot-DAT.SG
 ‘Such a saying had spread in Rome when this patriotic philosopher was still alive’. (LKT)
- (36) *Kunigaikšči-ai* *ir* *kit-i* *didžiūn-ai*,
 prince-NOM.PL and other-NOM.PL.M lord-NOM.PL
ne-be-bijo-dam-i *jau* *popieži-aus*,
 NEG-CNT-be.afraid-CNV-PL.M already Pope-GEN.SG
lup-o *bažnyči-as* *ir* *klioštori-us...*
 strip.off-PST church-ACC.PL and monastery-ACC.PL
 ‘Princes and other lords, already no more afraid of the Pope, plundered the churches and monasteries...’ (LKT)
- (37) a. **te-be-miegoj-im-as*
 POS-CNT-sleep-NML-NOM.SG
 intended meaning : ‘the fact of being still asleep’
- b. **ne-be-dainav-im-as*
 NEG-CNT-sing-NML-NOM.SG
 intended meaning : ‘the fact of being no longer singing’

Both Continuative and Discontinuative co-occur with such periphrastic constructions as Active Perfect/Resultative (38), resultative Passive (39), actional Passive (40), and Counterfactual (41). As the examples show, the prefixes *te-be-* and *ne-be-* can attach either to the participle or to the auxiliary with no discernable difference in meaning. However, in the corpora the Continuative prefixes much more frequently appear on the auxiliary, especially in the Perfect/Resultative constructions.

- (38) a. *Kai* *parėj-a-u*, *Kaz-ys* *te-be-buv-o*
 when return-PST-1SG Kazys-NOM.SG POS-CNT-AUX-PST
išėj-ęs.
 go.out-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M
 ‘When I came back, Kazys was still out.’

- b. *Kai parėj-a-u, Kaz-ys buv-o*
 when return-PST-1 Kazys-NOM.SG AUX-PST
te-be-išėj-ęs.
 POS-CNT-go.out-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M
 ‘= 38a’
- (39) a. *Kai parėj-a-u, lang-as ne-be-buv-o*
 when return-PST-1SG window-NOM.SG NEG-CNT-AUX-PST
atidary-t-as.
 open-PST.PP-NOM.SG.M
 ‘When I came back, the window was not open any more.’
- b. *Kai parėj-a-u, lang-as buv-o*
 when return-PST-1SG window-NOM.SG AUX-PST
ne-be-atidary-t-as.
 NEG-CNT-open-PST.PP-NOM.SG.M
 ‘= 39a’
- (40) a. *Apie t-as serij-as ir pakartojim-us*
 about that-ACC.PL.F series-ACC.PL and repetition-ACC.PL
jau buv-o daug kalbė-t-a ir
 already AUX-PST many speak-PST.PP-DF and
te-bėra kalb-a-m-a.
 POS-CNT + AUX.PRS.3 speak-PRS-PP-DF
 ‘A lot has been already said about these series and repetitions and they are still being talked about.’¹³
- b. *ir kalb-a apie daug k-q, apie k-q*
 and speak-PRS about many what-ACC about what-ACC
jau buv-o kalbė-t-a ir yra
 already AUX-PST speak-PST.PP-DF and AUX.PRS.3
te-be-kalb-a-m-a.
 POS-CNT-speak-PRS-PP-DF
 ‘... and they talk about many things which have already been discussed and are still being talked about.’ (LKT)

¹³ <http://www.kulturizmas.net/forumas/t1899-bico-ilginimas>

- (41) a. ... *gal ir šiandien dar bū-tų*
 maybe even today still AUX-IRR.3
te-be-dirb-us-i t-a
 POS-CNT-WORK-PST.PA-NOM.SG.F that-NOM.SG.F
pat-i koalicij-a.
 same-NOM.SG.f coalition-NOM.SG
 ‘... maybe this very coalition would still be working even
 today.’ (LKT)
- b. *Bet jei Lietuv-a te-be-bū-tų*
 but if Lithuania-NOM.SG POS-CNT-AUX-IRR.3
buv-us-i sssr sudėt-yje...
 be-PST.PA-NOM.SG.F USSR body-LOC.SG
 ‘But if Lithuania had still belonged to the USSR...’¹⁴

As we will see below, the ambivalent behaviour of the Continuative with respect to the periphrastic constructions finds parallels in its interaction with other grammatical operators and can be explained in a principled way.

5.3. Interaction with actional classes and tenses

In their basic meaning (for the semantic extensions of the negative variant of the Continuative, see next section), Continuative forms presuppose that a situation falling into the extension of the verbal stem held before the reference time and assert that this situation is still holding (*te-be-*) or holds no more (*ne-be-*). It follows from this definition that Continuative can combine only with durative (homogeneous) situations.

Indeed, if we limit ourselves to the Simple Past form, which in most cases unequivocally distinguishes between durative and instantaneous situations, we see that Continuative can attach to Stative (42), Processual atelic (43) and inherently telic (44) verbs, including iterative derivatives (45), and Inceptive (46) verbs, but is prohibited with Punctual (47) and Telic (48) predicates.

¹⁴ <http://www.supermama.lt/forumas/index.php?showtopic=532670&st=36>

Stative:

- (42) *Ir kai šiandien j-os su-kil-o,*
 and when today 3-NOM.PL.F PRV-rise-PST
j-is te-be-miegoj-o.
 3-NOM.SG.M POS-CNT-sleep-PST
 ‘And when they got up today, he was still sleeping.’ (LKT)

Processual:

- (43) *Ne-pa-kel-dam-as galv-os, atsak-ė į*
 NEG-PRV-raise-CNV-SG.M head-GEN.SG reply-PST in
j-os pasisveikinim-q, parod-ė kėd-ę,
 3-GEN.SG.F greeting-ACC.SG show-PST chair-ACC.SG
te-be-raš-ė.
 POS-CNT-write-PST
 ‘Without raising his head, he responded to her greeting,
 showed her a chair and kept writing.’ (LKT)
- (44) *T-q knyg-q j-is te-be-skait-o, bet*
 that-ACC.SG book-ACC.SG 3-NOM.SG.M POS-CNT-read-PRS but
sak-o jau greitai baig-si-qs.
 say-PRS already quickly finish-FUT-PA.NOM.SG.M
 ‘He is still reading this book but says that he will finish
 it soon.’¹⁵

Iterative:

- (45) *O j-i vis dar te-be-at-si-kirt-inėj-o*
 and 3-NOM.SG.F still still POS-CNT-PRV-RFL-CUT-ITER-PST
į sen-as pašaip-as, replik-as...
 in old-ACC.PL.F mockery-ACC.PL remark-ACC.PL
 ‘She still kept retorting at the old mockeries and remarks...’
 (LKT)

Inceptive:

- (46) *Paskiau, kai aš j-os ir*
 afterwards when I.NOM 3-GEN.SG.F and
ne-be-mylėj-a-u, tačiau iš veid-o ir
 NEG-CNT-love-PST-1 however from face-GEN.SG and

¹⁵ This example has been kindly suggested by an anonymous reviewer.

lyt-ies *j-i* *man* ***te-be-patik-o.***
 appearance-GEN.SG 3-NOM.SG.F I.DAT POS-CNT-like-PST
 ‘Afterwards, though I did not love her any more, I still
 liked her face and appearance.’ (Antanas Vienuolis, *Pati*¹⁶)

Punctual:

(47) **Kai aš parėj-a-u, Kaz-ys*
 when I.NOM return-PST-1 Kazys-NOM.SG
te-be-pa-raš-ė *laišk-q.*
 POS-CNT-PRV-write-PST letter-ACC.SG

Telic:

(48) **Kai aš parėj-a-u, vaik-as*
 when I.NOM return-PST-1 child-NOM.SG
te-be-užmig-o.
 POS-CNT-fall.asleep-PST

Since Stative, Processual and Inceptive predicates denote durative events, which satisfy the semantic restrictions imposed by the Continuative, the latter is able to combine with verbs of these aspectual classes. By contrast, Punctual and Telic verbs denote non-homogeneous eventualities, and therefore their combination with the Continuative is semantically illicit.

However, on closer examination it turns out that the restriction that the ‘input’ to the Continuative should be homogeneous is not lexical in nature. Once further tenses are considered, it becomes evident that the Continuative is not incompatible with Telic and Punctual verbs *per se*, but only with those forms thereof which denote non-homogeneous events. Combinations of the Continuative with Present and Past Habitual forms of Telic or Processual verb are perfectly felicitous, cf. (49)–(52).

(49) a. **Kaz-ys* ***te-be-atidar-ė*** *lang-q* *prieš*
 Kazys-NOM.SG POS-CNT-open-PST window-ACC.SG before
užmigdamas.
 falling.asleep

¹⁶ <http://www.antologija.lt/texts/34/tekstas/24.html>

- b. *Kaz-ys te-be-atidar-o lang-q prieš*
 Kazys-NOM.SG POS-CNT-OPEN-PRS window-ACC.SG before
užmigdamas.
 falling.asleep
 ‘Kazys still opens the window before going to sleep.’
- c. *Kaz-ys te-be-atidary-dav-o lang-q*
 Kazys-NOM.SG POS-CNT-OPEN-HAB-PST window-ACC.SG
prieš užmigdamas.
 before falling.asleep
 ‘Kazys still used to open the window before going to sleep.’
- (50) a. *Tėv-as te-be-parein-a namo dešimt-q*
 father-NOM. POS-CNT-return-PRS home tenth-ACC.SG
valand-q.
 hour-ACC.SG
 ‘Father still comes home at 10 o’clock.’
- b. *Pernai tėv-as te-be-parei-dav-o namo*
 last.year father-NOM.SG POS-CNT-return-HAB-PST home
dešimt-q valand-q.
 tenth-ACC.SG hour-ACC.SG
 ‘Last year father used to come home at 10 o’clock.’
- (51) *Ukrain-a ... iš kur j-am vis dar*
 Ukraine-NOM.SG from where 3-DAT.SG.M still still
te-be-at-ei-dav-o t-ie laišk-ai
 POS-CNT-PRV-COME-HAB-PST that-NOM.PL.M letter-NOM.PL
su širdel-ėm.
 with heart-INS.PL
 ‘Ukraine ... from where he was still receiving those letters
 with hearts.’ (LKT)
- (52) *Suaugus-ieji vis dar te-be-su-serg-a*
 adult-NOM.PL.M.DEF still still POS-CNT-PRV-be.ill-PRS
vėži-u dėl patir-t-os
 cancer-INS.SG because.of suffer-PP.PST-GEN.SG.F
radiacij-os, o vaik-ai te-be-gimst-a
 radiation-GEN.SG and child-NOM.PL POS-CNT-be.born-PRS

su genetini-o pobūdži-o defekt-ais.
 with genetic-GEN.SG.M kind-GEN.SG defect-INS.PL
 ‘Grown-ups still get cancer because of the radiation they had
 suffered, while children are still born with genetic defects.’
 (LKT)

A feature common to the sentences in (49)–(52) is the presence of an implicit (in the Present) or explicit (in the Past) habitual operator that ‘homogenizes’ (Vikner 1994) the predicate, which thus becomes durative and hence can combine with the Continuative.

With the inherently non-homogeneous predicates, the Continuative is only licit in the presence of some homogenizing operator, such as habitual, as in the examples above. In these situations, the Continuative can only have scope over the habitual. With durative predicates, however, the situation is different. Here, under appropriate contexts, the Continuative can have scope both above and below the habitual operator. This is illustrated in (53) and (54) for the Past Habitual and in (55) for the Present.

Continuative > Past Habitual

(53) a. *Pernai tėv-as te-be-dirb-dav-o nakt-imis.*
 last.year father-NOM.SG POS-CNT-work-HAB-PST night-INS.PL
 ‘Last year, father still used to work at night.’ <he used
 to work at night before, too>

Past Habitual > Continuative

(53) b. *Pernai, man parėj-us, tėv-as*
 last.year I.DAT return-PST.PA father-NOM.SG
te-be-dirb-dav-o.
 POS-CNT-work-HAB-PST
 ‘Last year, father would still be working when I came
 home.’

Continuative > Past Habitual

(54) a. *Vėliau atsirad-o medin-ė pakyl-a,*
 later appear-PST wooden-NOM.SG.F platform-NOM.SG
kad bū-tų aukščiau, tačiau kin-ai
 that be-IRR:3 higher however Chinese-NOM.PL

duality, which can be discovered only because it has tangible consequences for the interpretation, on a par with the formally overt but semantically vacuous dual behaviour of the Continuative with respect to the periphrastic constructions shown in the previous section.

If we go back to the interaction of the Continuative with the periphrastic constructions, we find out that the Perfect/Resultative forms exhibit a ‘mirror image’ distribution with respect to the Continuative in comparison with that of the Simple Past. Indeed, while the finite Simple Past forms of punctual and telic predicates are incompatible with the Continuative, precisely these verbs appear in the combinations of the Continuative with the Perfect/Resultative constructions, cf. examples (38)–(39) and (56)–(57). By contrast, the Continuative is incompatible with the Perfect/Resultative forms based on stative and processual verbs, cf. ungrammatical (58).

- (56) *J-is* *te-be-buv-o* *pa-skend-ęs*
 3-NOM.SG.M POS-CNT-AUX-PST PRV-dROWN-PST.PP.NOM.SG.M
apmąstym-uose...
 meditation-LOC.PL

‘He was still immersed in his meditations...’ (LKT)

- (57) *Jon-o* *lov-a* *iš* *vakarykšči-os*
 Jonas-GEN.SG bed-NOM.SG from yesterday-GEN.SG.F
te-be-buv-o *pa-klo-t-a.*
 POS-CNT-AUX-PST PRV-spread-PST.PP-NOM.SG.F

‘Jonas’ bed was still made since yesterday.’ (LKT)

- (58) a. **Kaz-ys* *te-be-buv-o* *gyven-ęs*
 Kazys-NOM.SG POS-CNT-AUX-PST live-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M
Vilni-uje.
 Vilnius-LOC.SG

- b. **Kaz-ys* *buv-o* *te-be-gyven-ęs*
 Kazys-NOM.SG AUX-PST POS-CNT-live-PST.PA.NOM.SG.M
Vilni-uje.
 Vilnius-LOC.SG

The reason for such at first sight paradoxical behaviour of the Continuative with respect to different tense-aspect forms is in fact simple and stems from its semantics. Since the Continuative is com-

patible only with descriptions of homogeneous eventualities, it can only attach to the resultative (i. e. semantically stative) variety of the Perfect/Resultative (see Nedjalkov & Jaxontov 1988, 15–16; Bybee & Dahl 1989, 69). However, the periphrastic constructions with the Past Active Participle have a resultative interpretation only with telic and punctual verbs (see Servaitė 1986, 1988; Geniušienė 1989), while with stative and processual verbs the relevant periphrases yield a Perfect (eventive) meaning incompatible with the Continuative.

Actually, the resultative variety of the Perfect/Resultative periphrastic construction can be treated on a par with the constructions involving a nominal or adjectival predicate and a copula (see Servaitė 1988, 87 on the syntactic parallelism of these types of construction). The latter freely combine with the Continuative, cf. examples (59), (60).

(59) *Te-be-buv-o-me kalini-ai ir kalintoj-ai...*
 POS-CNT-BE-PST-1PL prisoner-NOM.PL and turnkey-NOM.PL
 ‘We still were prisoners and turnkeys...’ (LKT)

(60) *Tik k-as sav-a vali-a parduo-s*
 only who-NOM OWN-INS.SG.F will-INS.SG sell-FUT
žem-ę, jeigu j-i te-be-bu-s pig-i?
 land-ACC.SG if 3-NOM.SG.F POS-CNT-BE-FUT cheap-NOM.SG.F
 ‘But who would sell land of his own free will, if it remains cheap?’ (LKT)

Since both the actional Passive and Counterfactual constructions do not affect the aspectual character of the eventuality denoted by the main verb, we do not expect their co-occurrence with the Continuative to significantly diverge from that of the Simple Past forms. This prediction is borne out, cf. (40)–(41), where the Continuative combines with the respective periphrastic constructions based on processual/stative verbs. However, the Counterfactual in fact turns out to be ambiguous between an actional (Past + Irrealis) and a resultative (Irrealis + State) interpretation, being able to co-occur with the Continuative in both cases, cf. (61) with the Counterfactual based on the telic main verb.

- (61) ... *tarsi j-ie* *te-be-bū-tų*
 as.if 3-NOM.PL.M POS-CNT-AUX-IRR:3
su-si-tuok-ę.
 PRV-RFL-marry-PST.PA.NOM.PL.M
 ‘... as if they were still married.’¹⁹

Finally, it should be said that a similar duality of the attachment of the Continuative can be observed in constructions with modal verbs, where it yields rather subtle semantic effects, cf. (62a) with the Continuative prefixed to the infinitive and (62b) with it appearing on the modal verb. Obviously, when the infinitive is a telic or a punctual verb, the Continuative can appear only on the modal, cf. (63).

- (62) a. *Galė-jo nuleis-ti galv-q ir te-be-maty-ti*
 can-PST lower-INF head-ACC.SG and POS-CNT-see-INF
žvaigžd-es.
 star-ACC.PL
 ‘He could lower his head and still see the stars.’ (LKT)

- b. *Aš niek-o ne-be-galėj-a-u maty-ti.*
 I.NOM nothing-GEN NEG-CNT-CAN-PST-1 see-INF
 ‘I couldn’t see anything any more.’ (LKT)

- (63) ... *veikiausiai te-be-galėj-o užsimerkęs*
 most.likely POS-CNT-CAN-PST with.eyes.shut
ras-ti j-q didžiausi-oje mini-oje.
 find-INF 3-ACC.SG.F largest-LOC.SG.F crowd-LOC.SG
 ‘... most likely he still could find her in the largest crowd.’ (LKT)

It remains to be investigated to which extent such behaviour of the Lithuanian Continuative can find parallels in other languages, both in those which have morphological means to express this meaning and in those which encode it lexically.

¹⁹ <http://whatson.delfi.lt/news/celebrities/article.php?id=23330515>

5.4. Discontinuative: From aspect to discourse

The restriction that the Continuative can only combine with bases denoting homogeneous situations is actually valid just for the positive variant of the Continuative with the complex prefix *te-be-*. The negative variant formed with *ne-be-*, by contrast, can attach to the Simple Past forms of Punctual and Telic verbs. These combinations, obviously, do not have the meaning ‘the event no longer persisted’; rather their semantics is shifted to the meaning ‘the event did not occur another time’ (cf. a similar polysemy of the English *not V any more*, French *ne V plus*, or Russian *bol’še ne V*; again, it is a subject of a possible cross-linguistic study to what extent this polysemy, as well as the semantic asymmetry between the positive and the negative variants of the continuative expressions is common in the languages of the world). Cf. ex. (64) with a Punctual verb and (65) with a Telic one.

- (64) *Motin-a paliet-ė rank-a j-o*
 mother-NOM.SG touch-PST hand-INS.SG 3-GEN.SG.M
koj-as, j-is ne-be-krūptelėj-o.
 leg-ACC.PL 3-NOM.SG.M NEG-CNT-start-PST
 ‘Mother touched his legs with her hand, and this time he did not give a start.’ (LKT)

- (65) *Bet į kit-ą susitikim-ą j-is*
 but in other-ACC.SG meeting-ACC.SG 3-NOM.SG.M
ne-be-atėj-o.
 NEG-CNT-COME-PST
 ‘But he did not come to the next meeting.’ (LKT)

The meaning of the Discontinuative in examples like (64) and (65) is actually quite close to the basic semantics of this form: the only difference between them is that the ‘ordinary’ Discontinuative asserts that the relevant (durative) situation has terminated, whereas the ‘extended’ Discontinuative asserts that the situation is not instantiated again. Both sub-meanings share a more or less strong pragmatic component, viz. the counterfactual expectation that the relevant situation will continue (resp. occur another time), see Plungian (1999, 317–318) and Mortier (2010, 425–427, 431–432) on the meaning of counterexpectation in continuative forms cross-linguistically. It seems that this pragmatic

component is largely (though probably not exclusively) responsible for the semantic extension of the Discontinuative. This hypothesis may be supported by the fact that the extension of the Discontinuative into the domain of purely discourse relations has gone even further: in the following examples it is not even implied that the situations denoted by the VP ('write an article', 'spoil') have occurred before the reference time at all; what *ne-be-* conveys here is a mere correction of the expectation that the relevant situation would occur in the real world.

- (66) ... *j-is* *reng-è-si* *t-uo* *klausim-u*
 3-NOM.SG.M prepare-PST-RFL that-INS.SG.M question-INS.SG
pa-rašy-ti *straipsn-ī.* *Tačiau, atrod-o,*
 PRV-write-INF article-ACC.SG however seem-PRS
t-o *straipsni-o* ***ne-be-pa-raš-ē,***
 that-GEN.SG.M article-GEN.SG NEG-CNT-PRV-write-PST
nes *po* *pusmeči-o* *mir-ē.*
 because after half.a.year-GEN.SG die-PST
 '... he was going to write an article on this topic. However,
 it seems that he never wrote <lit. never more wrote >
 this article, since in half a year he died.' (LKT)

- (67) *Mes* *es-a-me* *taip iklimp-ē,* *kad*
 we.NOM AUX-PRS-1PL SO stick-PST.PA.NOM.PL.M that
kažkok-s *tip-as* *iš laikrašči-o*
 some-NOM.SG.M fellow-NOM.SG from newspaper-GEN.SG
niek-o ***ne-be-su-gadin-s.***
 nothing-GEN NEG-CNT-PRV-spoil-FUT
 'We got so bogged down, that a fellow from the newspaper
 won't make things worse.' (LKT)

This kind of interpretation is available for the Discontinuative not just with the Simple Past or Future forms, but also with the Habitual Past, cf. example (68), where the habitual has scope over the 'counterexpectation'.

- (68) *Todēl* *t-ie* *lageri-ai* *pradžioje, su*
 therefore that-NOM.PL.M camp-NOM.PL initially with
Dachau pirm-ojoje *viet-oje,* *buv-o* *beveik*
 Dachau first-LOC.SG.F.DEF place-LOC.SG AUX-PST almost

be išimt-ies uždar-i, tai yra,
 without exception-GEN.SG closed-NOM.PL.M that is
tok-ie, iš kuri-ų niek-as
 such-NOM.PL.M from which-GEN.PL nobody-NOM.SG
gyv-as ne-be-išei-dav-o.
 alive-NOM.SG.M NEG-CNT-exit-HAB-PST
 ‘Therefore these camps from the very beginning and first and
 foremost Dachau were almost without exceptions closed, i. e.
 such, from where nobody came out alive any more.’ (Balys
 Sruoga. *Dievų miškas*²⁰)

Similar discourse-related uses are attested also for the already mentioned particle *nebe* ‘no more’, see examples (69)–(70).

(69) *Todėl mir-ti antr-q kart-q j-am*
 therefore die-INF second-ACC.SG time-ACC.SG 3-DAT.SG.M
bū-tų nebe taip skausminga ir gal netgi
 be-IRR:3 no.more so painful and maybe even
visai malonu.
 quite pleasant
 ‘Therefore for him to die a second time would probably not
 be so painful, but rather even pleasant.’ (LKT)

(70) ... *j-i primin-ė man, kad nebe*
 3-NOM.SG.F remind-PST I.DAT that no.more
už kaln-ų pavasar-is...
 behind hill-GEN.PL spring-NOM.SG
 ‘She reminded me that spring was already not far off...’
 (LKT)

Though a more detailed investigation is needed to determine the history of the Lithuanian Discontinuative, I propose the following plausible scenario of its semantic development:

- a. (Contrary to expectations) a situation of type V no more lasts / situations of type V occur no more (55) →
- b. Contrary to expectations, a situation of type V did not occur another time (64) →

²⁰ <http://antologija.lt/texts/39/tekstas/02.html>

- c. Contrary to expectations, a situation of type V did not occur (66).

The development in (71) involves the loss of the presuppositional component of the semantics of the Discontinuative ('a situation of type V held / occurred before the reference time') and the highlighting of the erstwhile peripheral component 'a situation of type V was expected to occur' (which with the regular aspectual use of the Discontinuative seems to be merely an implicature).

6. Conclusions

To conclude this paper, I would like to recapitulate the most important points:

1. The heretofore understudied Lithuanian non-derivational prefix *be-* has a large array of fairly divergent functions or uses, among which those related to aspect, viz. Avertive and Continuative, are prominent.

2. The Lithuanian Avertive constitutes a good example of this recently discovered cross-linguistic gram type, and shows systematic and predictable interactions with the various aspectual types of verbs. From the point of view of grammaticalization, it exemplifies a poorly documented development of the Progressive.

3. Though both forms discussed above employ the same formal marker (prefix *be-*) and possibly have a common origin, they differ substantially in their morphosyntactic and semantic properties, most importantly in their ability to combine with predicates of different aspectual types. Thus from the synchronic point of view it is hardly possible to ascribe any reasonably uniform meaning even to the aspectual subdomain of the uses of *be-*.

4. Both Continuative and Discontinuative show variable scope with respect to the Habitual and modal operators, somewhat paradoxically paralleled by semantically vacuous variability of attachment in periphrastic constructions such as Resultative, Passive and Counterfactual. This suggests that in the inflectional system of Lithuanian there is more covert functional-semantic structure than can be straightforwardly 'read off' the surface morphology.

To summarize, I hope to have shown that the combinatory possibilities and restrictions of the 'peripheral' verbal forms employing the

prefix *be-* can prove to be of no less importance for our understanding of the nature of Lithuanian verbal system, in particular of the covert structure of the verbal complex, than the better known morphological devices (lexical aspectual prefixation and suffixation).

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative, AUX — auxiliary, CNT — continuative, CNV — converb, DAT — dative, DEF — definite, DF — default agreement, F — feminine, FUT — future, GEN — genitive, HAB — habitual, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, IRR — irrealis, ITER — iterative, LOC — locative, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NML — nominalization, NOM — nominative, PA — active participle, PL — plural, POS — positive, POSS — possessive, PP — passive participle, PRS — present, PRV — preverb, PST — past, Q — question particle, RFL — reflexive, SG — singular

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