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The Latvian and Lithuanian perfects in a typological questionnaire and a parallel corpus

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Introduction

- Periphrastic (compound) perfect tenses of the Baltic languages have many parallels with other languages of the world, see Arkadiev & Wiemer (2020) for an overview of the Baltic perfects in comparison with Slavic and Drinka (2017) for the European context
- Perfect tenses of other languages have a long history of research in theoretical and typological literature (e.g. Dahl ed. 2000) that have led to development of analytical concepts and research methods

Introduction

- These concepts and methods have so far been applied to the Baltic perfects only to a limited extent and have mainly focused on Lithuanian (Geniušienė & Nedjalkov 1983, 1988, Geniušienė 1989; Wiemer 2012; Arkadiev 2012, 2016, 2021; Sakurai 2016; Kapkan forthcoming); on Latvian only Nau (2005)
- We present an empirical comparative study of the perfect tenses in standard Lithuanian and Latvian employing methods and concepts that have proved to be productive for the study of perfect forms cross-linguistically

Outline

- morphosyntactic structure of perfect forms
- sources of the data
- quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data
- conclusions

Simple vs Perfect (Compound) Tenses

1sg Latvian *krist*, Lithuanian *kristi* 'fall'

	Latvian		Lithuanian	
	Simple	Compound = Perfect	Simple	Compound = Perfect
Present	<i>krītu</i>	<i>esmu kritusi</i>	<i>krintu</i>	<i>esu kritusi</i>
Past	<i>kritu</i>	<i>biju kritusi</i>	<i>kritau</i>	<i>buvau kritusi</i>
Past Habitual	—	—	<i>krisdavau</i>	<i>būdavau kritusi</i>
Future	<i>kritīšu</i>	<i>būšu kritusi</i>	<i>krisiu</i>	<i>būsiu kritusi</i>

Perfect tenses: auxiliary 'be' + past active participle (ppa)

Simple vs Perfect (Compound) Tenses

- Latvian

Par to es jau esm-u dzirdēj-us-i

- Lithuanian

Apie tai aš jau es-u girdėj-us-i

about this I already **be.prs-1sg** **hear-ppa-f.sg**

‘I have already heard about this.’

Goal and sources

- Our goal is to establish differences and similarities between standard Latvian and standard Lithuanian in the uses and meaning of the perfect, in all three tenses, but with a special emphasis on the present tense.
- We use data from two different sources that complement each other, compensating for each other's limitations:
 - a typological questionnaire
 - a parallel corpus
- Spoiler: both sources point to the same differences in similarities between Latvian and Lithuanian
- The results have been partly published in Arkadiev & Daugavet (2021) and are to appear in Daugavet & Arkadiev (forthcoming)

Sources: Typological questionnaire

- Perfect Questionnaire (PQ) in Dahl (2000, 800–809), containing 88 entries to reveal potential uses of the Perfect.

[A: It seems that your sister never finishes books.] B: (That is not quite true.) **She READ this book (= all of it).**

- 5 Latvian and 7 Lithuanian native speakers, all females, most of them born in 1980-ies, with two Lithuanian speakers born in 1960-ies and one Latvian speaker born in 1991.

Sources: Parallel corpus

- The Parallel Corpus of Lithuanian and Latvian (LiLa) at www.korpuss.lv contains original texts in the two Baltic languages and their translations into the other Baltic language. (Indirect translations via English were excluded from our data.)
- The texts come from both fiction and non-fiction, as well as official documents, but we only used data from the former.

Lithuanian (source)

*Apie tai aš jau **esu girdėjusi** <...>*

Latvian (translation)

*Par to es jau **esmu dzirdējusi!***

Analysing the data

- quantitatively

number of sentences where the Perfect is found in each of the languages, how many examples share the use of the same Perfect form (e.g., the Present Perfect is more frequent in Latvian than in Lithuanian)

- qualitatively

what functions/meanings do the Perfect forms have in each of the languages (e.g. the Latvian Perfect conveys current relevance much more consistently than the Lithuanian Perfect)

Quantitative analysis

- the frequency of the Perfect depends on tense
- the Present Perfect is much more common in Latvian than in Lithuanian
- the Future Perfects are used equally in Latvian and Lithuanian
- the Lithuanian Past Perfect is used as often as the Latvian Past Perfect (PQ), or less often, but the gap is smaller than in the case of the Present Perfect (LiLa)

Occurrences in PQ

Entries translated with a perfect form by majority of informants

	Latvian	Lithuanian	shared
Present Perfect + 'bare' participles	39	16	12
Past Perfect	8	9	7
Future Perfect	4	3	2

The entries where the Perfect is used in Lithuanian make up a subset of entries where it is used in Latvian!

Frequency in LiLa (translations)

How often a particular perfect tense is preserved in translation

	into Latvian	into Lithuanian
Present Perfect	56%	20%
Past Perfect	70%	48%
Future Perfect	59%	52%

Qualitative analysis

- focuses on the Present Perfect because the quantitative analysis has shown that the differences in the uses of Perfect between Latvian and Lithuanian concentrate in the present tense
- both PQ and LiLa reveal functions typical for the Present Perfect in both languages, that is, resultative and experiential
- the Latvian Present Perfect has developed the meaning of ‘current relevance’, which remains marginal in Lithuanian
- Lithuanian makes use of perfect-like constructions with a stative meaning that historically predate the development of compound tenses

Resultative use

- According to Nedjalkov & Jaxontov (1988, 6), the resultative meaning is found in a form that refers to a state resulting from a preceding event; such forms are derived from telic verbs that denote events with an inherent endpoint
- Although the Present Perfect is regularly found in the resultative use in both Baltic languages, both PQ and LiLa show that Latvian uses the Present Perfect in this meaning more consistently than Lithuanian, which sometimes prefers the Simple Past in resultative contexts

Resultative use (PQ)

- both Latvian and Lithuanian use the Present Perfect to convey the resultative meaning in the corresponding entries of PQ

[A: Don't talk so loud! You'll wake the baby.] B: He WAKE UP already.

Latvian *Viņš jau **ir pamodies**.*

Lithuanian *Jis jau [yra] **pabudęs**.*

‘He has already awoken.’

Resultative use (PQ)

- Latvian uses the Present Perfect to convey the resultative meaning where Lithuanian uses the Simple Past

[B's sister is known to have gone to another town. Question:] A: Your sister COME BACK?

Latvian *Tava māsa **ir atgriezusies**?*

Lithuanian *Ar tavo sesuo **grįžo**?*

Resultative use (LiLa)

- Original Lithuanian sentences containing resultative uses of the Present Perfect are consistently translated by means of the Present Perfect into Latvian

Lithuanian (source)

*Šiandien akivaizdu, kad Seime **yra susidariusi** nauja dauguma.*

Latvian (translation)

*Šodien ir acīmredzams, ka Seimā **ir izveidojies** jauns vairākums.*

‘It is evident today that a new majority has formed in the Parliament.’

Resultative use (LiLa)

- Original Latvian sentences containing resultative uses of the Present Perfect are translated by means of the Present Perfect into Lithuanian
Latvian (source)

*Vai **esmu atpalikusi** no sava laika vai **aizsteigusies** tam priekšā?*

Lithuanian (translation)

*Ar **esu atsilikusi** nuo savo laiko, ar **pralenkusi** jį?*

‘Have I fallen behind my time or hurried away ahead of it?’

Resultative use (LiLa)

- Original Latvian sentences containing resultative uses of the Present Perfect are translated by means of the Simple Past into Lithuanian
Latvian (source)

*Dzer tēju, ja **esi nosalusi**, nevis brīdini bērnus, — viņš norīkoja.*

Lithuanian (translation)

*Išgerk arbatos, jeigu **sušalai**, o ne kabinėkis prie vaikų, — pamokė jis.*

‘You should drink tea if you feel cold rather than admonish the children, he instructed.’

Experiential use (PQ)

- A situation of a certain type occurs at least once during a time interval in the past up to the present (Comrie 1976, 58)
- Although the experiential use of the Present Perfect is usual in the two Baltic languages, evidence from both PQ and LiLa point to Latvian being more consistent than Lithuanian, where one finds the Simple Past instead – or the Past Perfect – in experiential contexts

Experiential use (PQ)

- both Latvian and Lithuanian use the Present Perfect to convey the experiential meaning in the corresponding entries of PQ

You BE to (VISIT) Australia (ever in your life)?

Latvian *Tu **esi bijis** Austrālijā?*

Lithuanian *Ar **esi buvęs** Australijoje?*

‘Have you ever been to Australia?’

Experiential use (PQ)

- Lithuanian uses the Simple Past in PQ where Latvian employs the Present Perfect

[Question: Can you swim in this lake? (= Is it possible for anybody to swim in this lake?) Answer:] Yes, at least I SWIM in it several times.

Latvian *Jā, vismaz es tajā **esmu peldējies** vairākas reizes.*

Lithuanian *Taip, bent jau aš **plaukiojau** jame keletą kartų.*

Experiential use (PQ)

- Lithuanian uses the Past Perfect in PQ where Latvian employs the Present Perfect

[Question: Do you know my sister? Answer:] Yes, I MEET her (so I know her).

Latvian *Jā, es viņu **esmu saticis**.*

Lithuanian *Taip, aš **buvau ją sutikęs**.*

Experiential use (LiLa)

- Original Lithuanian sentences containing experiential uses of the Present Perfect are translated by means of the Present Perfect into Latvian

Lithuanian (source)

*Jūs **esat rašiusi** eilėraščius?*

Latvian (translation)

*Vai jūs **esat rakstījusi** dzejoļus?*

Experiential use (LiLa)

- Original Latvian sentences containing experiential uses of the Present Perfect are translated by means of the Present Perfect into Lithuanian
Latvian (source)

*Vai kādreiz **esat bijusi** laimīga?*

Lithuanian (translation)

*Ar kada nors **esate buvus** laiminga?*

Experiential use (LiLa)

- Original Latvian sentences containing experiential uses of the Present Perfect are translated by means of the Simple Past into Lithuanian

Latvian (source)

Esat lasījusi tādu pasaku?

Lithuanian (translation)

Ar skaitėte tokią pasaką?

Current relevance

- While the experiential refers to event types, the meaning of current relevance introduces singular event tokens in the past (Dahl & Hedin 2000, 389).
- The difference from the resultative is that the effect of the previous situation is ‘not directly derivable from the meaning of the verb’ (Dahl & Hedin 2000, 392), which therefore is not necessarily telic. In order to understand the following example one has to know that lack of sleep usually induces tiredness:

Latvian *Es neesmu gulējis trīs naktis.*

‘I have not slept for three days.’

Current relevance

- both PQ and LiLa show the current relevance use of the Present Perfect to be more developed in Latvian than in Lithuanian, although with some differences
- according to PQ, the Present Perfect in the meaning of current relevance is not used consistently even in Latvian and is completely absent from Lithuanian
- LiLa reveals that the current relevance use of the Present Perfect is possible in Lithuanian but is only compatible with telic verbs, while no such restrictions pertain to Latvian

Current relevance (PQ)

- In order to convey current relevance, Latvian uses the Present Perfect and the Simple Past, but only the Simple Past is found in Lithuanian.

[The window is open but A has not noticed that. A asks B: why is it so cold in the room?] B: I OPEN the window.

Latvian *Es **atvēru** logu.*

***Esmu atvēris** logu.*

Lithuanian *Aš **atidariau** langą.*

Current relevance (LiLa)

- the Latvian Present Perfect is translated by means of the Simple Past into Lithuanian if the event is construed as a process or state in terms of Vendler's event classes

Latvian (source)

*Jā, izskatās, ka tu pārāk ilgi **esi staigājusi** saulē bez cepures.*

Lithuanian (translation)

*Taip, atrodo, kad tu gana ilgai **vaikštinėjai** saulėje be kepurės.*

‘Yes, it seems that you have walked too long in the sun without a cap.’

Current relevance (LiLa)

- the Latvian Present Perfect is translated by means of the Present Perfect into Lithuanian if the event is construed as an accomplishment or achievement in terms of Vender's event classes

Latvian (source)

*Jūs savā biogrāfijā **esat noklusējusi** dažus faktus.*

Lithuanian (translation)

*Tamsta savo biografijoje **esi nutylėjusi** keletą faktų.*

‘You have concealed certain facts of your biography.’

Perfect-like constructions

- It is still possible in both languages to use a combination of the copula 'be' and the active past participle, often lexicalised, in a purely stative meaning (Servaitė 1988, Ambrazas 2006, 171–172).

Lithuanian (LiLa)

*Mūsų šalis pritaria susitarimui ir **yra pasirengusi** prisijungti prie Europos Sąjungos.*

'Our country joins the agreement and is ready to join the European Union.'

Perfect-like constructions

- This construction is formally reminiscent of the perfect but implies no previous event; see Nedjalkov & Jaxontov (1988, 5–7) on stative resultatives.
- Rather than being marginal, such perfect-like constructions with a stative meaning constitute a significant part of the Present Perfect uses in Lithuanian (Kapkan, forthcoming)

Perfect-like constructions

- Since they do not serve any uses of the real perfect, these constructions are not revealed in PQ
- LiLa contains many instances of perfect-like constructions in the original Lithuanian texts; adjectivised active participles are translated by means of passive participles and adjectives into Latvian

Perfect-like constructions (LiLa)

- Latvian adjectives in place of Lithuanian adjectivised active participles
Lithuanian (source)

*Mūsų šalis pritaria susitarimui ir **yra pasirengusi** prisijungti prie Europos Sąjungos.*

Latvian (translation)

*Mūsu valsts piekrīt norunai un **ir gatava** pievienoties Eiropas Savienībai.*

‘Our country joins the agreement and is ready to join the European Union.’

Perfect-like constructions (LiLa)

- Latvian passive participles in place of Lithuanian adjectivised active participles

Lithuanian (source)

*O aš **esu įsitikinusi**, jog jis iš tikrųjų sulaukė jos!*

Latvian (translation)

*Es **esmu pārliecināta**, ka viņš to patiešām sagaidījis!*

‘I’m convinced that he kept waiting until she came!’

Conclusions

- Out of the three perfect tenses, the greatest difference between Latvian and Lithuanian is found in the Present Perfect
- The Present Perfect appears more consistently in Latvian than in Lithuanian even in those uses that are shared by both languages (resultative and experiential)
- The Latvian Present Perfect has developed the meaning of current relevance which remains marginal in Lithuanian
- Lithuanian frequently employs perfect-like constructions with a non-perfect meaning that are marginal in Latvian

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