

VIOLETA KALĒDAITĒ

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a case study of existential sentences in Lithuanian**

The assertion that everything exists in space and time has long become a philosophical truism; we are all aware of the pre-Socratic dictum 'whatever is, is somewhere; what is nowhere is nothing'. As for the linguistic expression of existence, this function is performed by an existential construction developed in many world languages, including Lithuanian.

The paper focuses on the locative-existential sentence type in Lithuanian. The classical schema posited for this type of sentence across languages is Locative element + Vexist + NPindef. This is exactly the pattern found in Lithuanian:

- (1) Šlapioje pievoje – tikrame varlyne! buvo gausybė
damp:LOCsg meadow:LOCsg real:LOCsg frog-place:LOCsg were a lot of
gandrų.
stork:GENpl

'In a damp meadow – just the place for frogs! – there were plenty of storks'

The paper argues that the locative element in the Lithuanian ES is conceptualised in the broadest spatio-temporal sense; this approach reflects the philosophical and cognitive aspects of our conceptual frame of reference as shown by Lakoff and Johnson (1999:30-31). The specific issues addressed in the paper include:

- 1) The relevance of a locative element in an ES;
- 2) The domain of existence: spatio-temporal location, class inclusion and discourse as 'mental space' (Fauconnier 1985);
- 3) Variation in placement of a locative element.

The data for the analysis are drawn from the Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian Language at <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/>.

References

- Fauconnier, Gilles. 1985. *Mental spaces*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1999. *Philosophy in the flesh. The embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. Basic Books.