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Lithuanian and Latvian possessive constructions in an areal perspective

The aim of this paper is to present an overview of the constructions used in Latvian and Lithuanian to express predicative possession, placing them in a European perspective.

As it has been shown in Stolz et al. (2008), it is characteristic for European languages to use the same construction for expressing prototypical as well as non-prototypical possessive meaning. The prototypical possessive relation has usually been identified with ownership (cf. Heine 1997: 33ff.); other non-prototypical possessive notions are temporary possession, body-parts possession, social possession, abstract possession and inanimate possession (cf. Mazzitelli 2015: 22-26).

English offers an example of typical European behaviour. Its verb *have* can express all the aforementioned notions: *I have a car/ my mother's car/blue eyes/two sisters/a problem; the table has four legs.* This behaviour is not limited to languages, displaying a 'have' verb; in Russian, for instance, the adessive construction *u* 'at' + NP_{GEN} can also be used to express most possessive meanings (cf. Činčlej 1990; Weiß and Rakhilina 2002).

Latvian follows the typical European model. Its dative construction can be used to express both prototypical as well as non-prototypical possessive meanings.

Lithuanian, on the other hand, employs the verb *turėti* 'have' to express ownership, as well as a wide range of non-prototypical possessive notions. As already noticed before (cf. Činčlej 1990; Holvoet 2003 and 2005; Stolz et al. 2008: 434ff.; Mazzitelli 2013 and 2015), though, there are some cases, where the verb *turėti* is disliked and other constructions, featuring the genitive and the dative case, are preferred. Namely, these cases are possession of diseases, of age and of physical characteristics: *man*$_{DAT}$*yra gripas* 'I have the flu'/ *man dvidešimt metų* 'I am twenty years old'/ *mano yra šviesūs plaukai* 'I have blond hair'.

In the paper, the behaviour of Latvian and Lithuanian in the realm of predicative constructions will be analysed with reference to the convergence processes attested in the area, where these two languages are spoken.

Particular attention will be paid to the convergence process between Latvian and Estonian, which has led the two languages to distinguish themselves from the sister languages Lithuanian on the one side and Balto-Finnic languages on the other side. The Belarusian-Lithuanian parallels, and the influences that Polish on the one side and Russian have exerted on (sub)standard Lithuanian will also be highlited.

It will be finally shown that the formal coincidence between experiencers and possessors (both coded with the dative case) has led Latvian to an extensive use of its possessive construction. The formal distinction between possessors (nominative subjects of *turėti*) and experiencers (dative adjuncts) in Lithuanian, where divergent tendencies - extension of the functions of the ownership construction to include experiential meanings on the one side and preference for the dative coding of experiencers (Seržant forthcoming) on the other side – confront, has led insted to the creation of a split system.

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