

Grammatical Category of Evidentiality and its Expression in Lithuanian

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Abstract. Of all the Indo-European languages only Lithuanian has sustained the old usage of participles which is motivated by the structural features of old simple sentences. Nevertheless, in the course of time the use of participles has become more restricted and their modal function which is specific, uncharacteristic and untypical of other languages has been fading away. Participles perform the function of the category of evidentiality in the Lithuanian language. The participial narration (the same as the indicative mood) employs all the four tenses. Nevertheless, the past simple tense is the most frequent one. This is a specific (though declining) feature of Lithuanian which is contrasted with the indicative mood and is defined as a member of the paradigm of morphological category of mood (*modus relativus*) in all Lithuanian grammars and by some authors of scientific articles. However, *modus relativus* should not be regarded as the morphological category of mood. *Modus relativus* and *modus indicativus* are synonymous categories as there is not a single case in modern Lithuanian where *modus relativus* could not be interchanged or substituted by *modus indicativus*. The English language has no specific means to express the grammatical category of evidentiality; nevertheless, the information is not lost while translating from Lithuanian to English. However, some nuances which are felt in the original are forfeited in the translation.

Key words: *participle, modus indicativus, modus relativus, the category of evidentiality, passive voice, morphological category of mood.*

Introduction

The category of evidentiality in linguistics is called the usage of other forms instead of the indicative mood in a narration. Participles perform this function, it is narrated while using all the tenses, nevertheless, the past simple tense is the most frequent one. Thereby, the participial narration (the same as the indicative mood) has all the four tenses. This is a specific (though declining) feature of Lithuanian which is contrasted with the indicative mood and qualified as a member of the paradigm of morphological category of mood (*modus relativus*) in all Lithuanian grammars and by some authors of scientific articles. The concept was used for the first time in linguistics by F. Boas (1911 in Holvoet 2004: p105-106) and E. Sapir (1921 in Holvoet 2004: p105-106). The term *evidentiality* is associated to the primal meaning of the word *evidentiality* in Lithuanian: *evidence*; nevertheless, it refers to the secondary meaning of the word: *ground for belief; proof* (Holvoet 2004: p106). Thereby, the phenomenon will be referred to as the grammatical category of evidentiality in this article.

The paper *aims* at defining the grammatical category of evidentiality and its status in Lithuanian linguistics. Moreover, the examples of it in the Lithuanian language will be analyzed and compared with the expression of the phenomenon in English (the language which has no specific means to express the grammatical category of evidentiality). Furthermore, the synonymous, not the opposite use of the indicative mood (*modus indicatives*) and the relative mood (*modus relativus*) will be emphasized.

Grammatical category usually is the system of forms sustained by common (invariant) meaning. The members of it have to distinguish each other by the substructure of

the common meaning. The paradigm of the grammatical category of evidentiality is shown by the examples in Table 1.

Table 1. Examples of the grammatical category of evidentiality

Lithuanian	English translation
bešokančios	dancing
besėdįs	sitting
jų esama	they are
turima	they have
sako, jis išvažiavęs	they say he has gone
sako, jis išvažiudavęs	they say he used to go
sako, jis išvažiuosias	they say he will go
jo jau išvažiauta	he is gone, he has gone

As it is evident by the examples given below the difference in voice is neutralised in all the cases since even the forms of passive voice are the synonyms of the inflected verbs:

Pasirodo ir jų čia esama¹ (= Pasirodo ir jie čia yra).
Jo jau išvažiuota, Kiškio čia tupėta (= Jis jau išvažiavęs
// išvažiavo; kiškis čia tupėjęs // tupėjo).

Here we have only the forms of passive voice without the meaning of the category.

The general meaning of the system is a certain uncertainty while differential distinctions could be indicated as follows:

1. surprise when seen;
2. conveying what has been heard but not evidenced by oneself;

¹ The examples with no reference indicated have been created by the author

3. decision that something has taken place or has happened according to the remaining marks.

Nevertheless, the category does not pertain to the paradigm of morphological mood since it is completely synonymous with the indicative mood as if being stratified on it but with some additional modal aspects which can not be indicated as equivalent meanings of morphological mood. Therefore, some of linguists name that category a parasitical one (according to the phenomenon in the nature when one plant sponges on another plant, e.g. viscum).

This grammatical category of evidentiality is sometimes called participial language in Lithuanian linguistics.

Regular usage of participles in the Lithuanian language was emphasized already in the first Lithuanian grammar. Participles are more frequent in Lithuanian than in Greek or Latin. From all the Indo-European languages only Lithuanian has sustained the old usage of participles which has been motivated by the structural characteristics of old simple sentences of the Lithuanian language. Such usage is typical to spoken language and fiction in Lithuanian. In this regard, a distinction from Slavic and Germanic languages is noticed, where the use of participles is determined by the features of literary language.

Nevertheless, in the course of time the use of participles has become more restricted in Lithuanian and their modal function which is specific, uncharacteristic and untypical of other languages has been fading away. The tendency to the reduced use of participles is demonstrated already in the first grammar of the Lithuanian language:

*Tik (=tiki) save valnu pastosianti// Tik. jog valnu pastos Džiaugiuos tave sveiką namo parėjusi// Džiaugiuos, jog tu sveiks namo parėjai*² (J. Balčikonis 1957: p522).

There are even more specific and already forgotten cases of the use of participles found here. However, there are no examples of participles used in narrative speech. Presumably, the use of participles was determined by the source of the grammar i.e. religious texts or perhaps there was no such reported participial speech yet. Ambrazas does not provide many examples of it in his work on historical syntax of the Lithuanian participle as well (Ambrazas 1979: p188-198). Furthermore, it is doubtful whether the following sentences could be termed as the examples of such speech:

Po trijų dienų tėvai žiūri – visas žalčių pulkas besilaužias į jų kiemą.

Čia turbūt ir grybų esama.

Ten šuns bėga.

Participles possess various modal nuances in the predicate position and belong to different categories. Active participles are generally used in reported speech. They are the equivalents of tenses in the indicative mood. Jablonskis indicated the usage of participles to report information gained from others. He proposed two codes (here referred to as *a* and *b*) of the same data associated with the compound forms of the indicative mood:

- a) 1. Jonas buvo visų stumdomas.

2. Jis bus visų mylimas.
3. Jis yra ir vilką matęs.
4. Tėvas buvo tuokart kur išvažiavęs.
5. Genys kiškį klausia: „Kodėl tu toks nuliūdes? Kur eini?“ Kiškis sako: „Kur aš nebūsiu nuliūdes! Manęs niekas nebijo, o aš turiu visų bijoti! Einu ir prisi-girdysiu!“

Here Jablonskis transforms direct speech which states facts into *indirect narrative* one:

- b) 1. Jonas buves visų stumdomas.
2. Jis būsiqs visų mylimas.
3. Jis esqs ir vilką matęs.
4. Tėvas buves tuokart kur išvažiavęs.
5. Genys kiškį klausiqs: kodėl jis esqs toks nuliūdes? Kur einqs?“ Kiškis sakqs: kur jis nebūsiqs nuliūdes – jo niekas nebijqs, o jis turiqs visų bijoti! Einqs ir prisi-girdysiqs!“ (J. Jablonskis 1957: p312-313).

Such transformation of the indicative mood into modus relativus would be impossible if the two forms were opposite but not synonymous. Here is another very distinctive example:

Tai atsitikę vieną kartą, kai jis ėjęs namo iš smuklės, kaip vietiniai žmonės sako, snukiu ardamas. Bet neparėjęs namo, o pakeliui įvirtęs į griovį. Išlipi jis nebeįstengęs daugiau ir dėl to šaukęsis pagalbos. Ar ilgai jis šūkavęs kas pasakys, tik parvažiuodamas iš turgaus vienas žvejys jį pastebėjęs:

– Ko čia šūkai? – paklausęs žvejys.

– Ar tu nematai, kad aš griovį? – pykęs Plonis. – Ar girtas esi? (I. Simonaitytė)

That happened when he was on his way back home from a pub absolutely drunk. Still, he did not manage to get back home but tumbled into a trench. He wasn't able to (couldn't) get out of it that is why he was crying for help. Nobody knows for how long he had been crying when a fisherman coming back from a market noticed him.

‘Why are you crying?’ he asked.

‘Can’t you see I am down in the trench?’ Plonis got angry (was getting angry). ‘Are you drunk?’

All this narration could be modified by the forms of the indicative mood. Hence, there is no mood distinction here. The distinction is only between direct and indirect speech. All the tenses of participles are used to narrate. Yet, since past narrations are more frequent, past participles are more frequent in reported speech as well.

The narration is translated into English using the past tenses: the past simple tense, the past continuous tense, as well as with the help of the modal verb *could*. The English language has no specific means to express the grammatical category of evidentiality. Nevertheless, the information is not lost in the translation. However, some nuances which are felt in the original are forfeited in the translation.

Juk dar rudenį atėjęs atsisveikino su mumis, sakdamas, kad, kai tik pabaigsiqs pardavinėti savo kromą, tuojau važiuosiqs į Londoną pas vaikus. Jie seniai jį kviečia, ten geriau jam būsiq, negu čia vienai vienam, kaip tam žvirbliui, vienam pasilikusiam ant stogo. Nuo to sykio per visą žiemą ir pavasarį nematėme Šmulkos ir nuanėmė jį išvažiavus. Ir štai dabar Šmulka besėdqs prieangyje, gre-

² The spelling has been simplified

ta kromo, pavargęs, šluostydamasis prakaituotą kaktą ir sunkiai alsuodamas, lietas, senas, su ilgu, juodu, pažaliavusiu chalatų kromo pratrinta nugara. (Šatrijos Ragana)

Already in autumn Šmulka came to say goodbye and said that as soon as he finished selling his property he would go to London to his children. As he said they had been inviting him for quite a while saying he would be better there than now being totally alone like a lonely sparrow on the roof of a house. After that, during all winter and even spring, we did not see Šmulka and thought he was gone away. And now here he is sitting on the porch next to his house all tired, wiping his sweating forehead and breathing heavily, all skinny, old, dressed in old long greenish black smock.

All those Lithuanian participles are translated into English with the help of indicative tenses: the past simple tense, the past continuous tense, future in the past. As we can see from the translation diverse forms are used to express the grammatical category of evidentiality in English, which, nevertheless, do not express certain nuances perceived in the Lithuanian language. Still, the amount of information is rather similar. The specific style characteristic of the phenomenon is unfortunately lost in the translation.

Ir sužinojo priešininkai, kad ne paprasto kareivio jų rūšy sėdima, bet didžio ir galingo bajoro sūnaus. (V. Krėvė)

And the enemy found out the soldier locked in the cellar was not an ordinary one but he was a son of a mighty lord.

The Lithuanian example above and its translation into English emphasize that the languages which do not possess the grammatical category of evidentiality use simple forms of the verb to express it, e.g. the past simple tense (as in the previous case).

In 1937 Lazauskas was the first researcher to term this narrative speech as the oblique mood (modus relativus) (Lazauskas 1937: p24-26). His argument was that this fifth mood would enable participles to relate with inflective verbs more closely, which is groundless since the reality does not depend on the intention to link something together. He also indicated that the Latvian language had the narrative (oblique) mood. Unfortunately, Lazauskas did not notice the most important thing i.e., that special present and future participles (already without the meaning of participles) perform the role of narrative speech in Latvian (Endzelins 1951: p976; Bergmane 1959: p624; Nitiņa 2001: p105-107). Therefore, Lithuanian modus relativus should not be compared with the Latvian narrative mood. This mood is not regarded as other old inherited Latvian moods in the academic grammar of the Latvian language (Bergmane 1959: p624). Nevertheless, Ambrazas has no doubt that, according to the 17th century texts, Lithuanian and Latvian narrative participial speech developed in Eastern Baltic dialects in prehistoric times (Ambrazas 1979: p194).

The chapter on mood in the Lithuanian academic grammar was written by Gailiūnas. He was not a language theoretician. Instead, he was interested in pedagogy and language teaching methodology, therefore, he easily adopted Lazauskas' proposition to include modus relativus in the same paradigm with the grammatical moods possessing morphological forms. Unfortunately, Lithuanian linguistics was aware neither of paradigmatic correlation of members in the same category nor

of Jakobson's principle of oppositions adjusted in morphology at that time.

The major controversy over modus relativus was created by Paulauskienė (1971: p158-159; 1979b: p63-69) who, writing about the contemporary Lithuanian verb, studied grammatical categories of the verb and declared that modus relativus should not be regarded as the morphological category of mood. Paulauskienė refers to Jablonskis in all her works and insists that modus relativus is not a morphological category. According to her, the decline of this mood is inevitable as there are internal and external factors determining that i.e. the synonymy of modus relativus and modus indicativus as well as the influence of other languages. She asserts that there is not a single case in modern Lithuanian where modus relativus could not be interchanged or substituted by modus indicativus, e.g.

Pasakojo vaidilos, kad Perkūnas apkarūnavęs (apkarūnavo) Žilvino dvasią gintaro karūna ir apgyvendinęs (apgyvendino) ją jūros dugne atstatytuose Jūratės rūmuose. (A. Vieniulis)

Daktaras paskui pasakodavosi, kad niekad dar nebuvo mātės (nebuvo mātės) paukščio, taip matroną primenančio (P. Mašiotas) (Paulauskienė 1979a: p155; 1994: p304-308).

All modern Lithuanian grammars consider the use of participles in narrative speech as mood (modus relativus) and include it in the same paradigm with the grammatical moods possessing morphological forms (Ambrazas 1971; 1997a; 1997b). In addition, the opposition between modus relativus and modus indicativus is indicated here. The expert of historical syntax of the Lithuanian participle Ambrazas is very persistent in this respect as well. He has always stated (and still does) that modus relativus is attached to the morphological category of mood and that it is in the opposition with the indicative mood (Ambrazas 1979: p188-209; 1970: p6-13; 1977: p7-54). He claims that modus relativus consists of active participles in the nominative case, used in the function which is typical of a finite form of the verb, and it is in the opposition with modus indicativus, e.g. *jis gyvenąs kaime* (modus relativus) and *jis gyvena kaime* (modus indicativus) (Ambrazas 1979: p188).

Unfortunately, in this case only a very inconsiderable modal distinction is regarded as the opposition. In case of a real opposition between modus indicativus and modus relativus there should be at least one context where the alternative usage of the two moods could be impossible.

Holvoet (2004: p105-120) expresses quite a different view on the issue and detaches modus relativus from the morphological category of mood and refers to it as the

“parasitical” category of evidentiality since “its meaning is usually coded as part of the modal system of a language, with overlap into certain areas of tense and aspect” (Willet 1988 quoted in Holvoet 2004: p107).

Wiemer also states that Lithuanian participial speech adjoin other grammatical categories where the same participles are the members of the paradigm. He also indicates that participles do not possess the meaning of evidentiality in Lithuanian. This meaning can be noticed only in some constructions where the participles are the core. He also

claims that the grammatical category of evidentiality is noticed in some specific genres (styles) e.g. folklore, journalism (Wiemer 2006: p33-49).

This interpretation appears to be sound since relativity could be identified only if the participle appears in the relative clause the predicate of which shows the relation with what was reported in the principal clause, e.g.

O aš girdėjau, kad velnias judu atvilkęs (P. Mašiotas).

Girdėjo kalbant, kad jis turėjęs kitą motutę, kuri mirusi ir ji visai dar mažą palikusi (J. Biliūnas).

These are the examples of a beautiful Lithuanian form of expression. Unfortunately, they can be translated literally neither into English nor into Russian. Therefore, they are condemned to extinction. Accordingly, written narrative participial speech is no longer used.

Conclusions

Taking all this into account, it should be reasonable to emphasize the synonymous, not the opposite use of modus relativus and modus indicativus and state that modus relativus should not be considered as the morphological category of mood. The nuance of modality can be noticed only when the participle is found with no auxiliary verb in the syntactic position of the inflected verb.

The languages which do not possess such a category use indicative forms to express it (which is also possible in the Lithuanian language). Thus, the influence of the other languages (English, Russian) is not of the least importance, too. Thereby, with all the facts being considered, the future status of modus relativus and its prospective usage is uncertain in the Lithuanian language.

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Gramatinė evidencialumo kategorija ir jos raiška lietuvių kalboje

Santrauka

Evidencialumo kategorija lingvistinėje literatūroje yra vadinamas kitų formų vartojimas vietoj tiesioginės nuosakos atpasakojamojoje kalboje. Lietuvių kalboje šią funkciją atlieka dalyviai, pasakojama yra visais laikais, tačiau dažniausiai būtuojų laiku. Taigi pasakojimas dalyviais (kaip ir tiesioginė nuosaka) turi visus keturis laikus. Tai specifinė (dabar jau nykstanti) lietuvių kalbos ypatybė, akademiniuose lietuvių kalbos gramatikose ir kai kuriuose straipsniuose dar priešinama su tiesiogine nuosaka, laikoma morfologinės nuosakos paradigmos nariu (modus relativus). Iš visų ide. kalbų būtent lietuvių kalba išlaikė senovinę dalyvių vartoseną, kurią motyvuoja senovinio vientisinio sakinio sandaros ypatybės. Tokia vartoseną būdinga šnekamajai kalbai ir grožinei literatūrai. Šiuo atžvilgiu pastebimas didelis skirtumas nuo slavų ir germanų kalbų, taip pat ir nuo klasikinių sanskritų bei lotynų kalbų. Tačiau taip vadinamoji netiesioginė nuosaka yra ne opozicinė, o sinoniminė su tiesiogine nuosaka. Svarbiausias argumentas yra tas, kad visais atvejais galima tiesioginę nuosaką pakeisti vadinamąja netiesiogine ir nėra nė vieno konteksto, kur to padaryti būtų neįmanoma. Anglų kalboje nėra specialių formų evidencialumo kategorijai reikšti. Informacija perteikiama tiksliai, tačiau, kaip bebūtų gaila, vertime pranyksta tam tikri atspalviai, kurie yra jaučiami lietuvių kalboje.

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