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Reported evidential in Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian: a pilot study of translated fiction

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Outline

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1. Reported evidential in Circum Baltic

Baltic and Finnic languages located in the eastern part of the Circum-Baltic area use a grammaticalized reported evidential construction (= REP) that developed on the basis of participial forms

Aikhenvald 2018; Friedman 2018; Holvoet 2007; Kehayov 2008; Koptjevskaja-Tamm & Wälchli 2001, among others

1. Reported evidential in Circum Baltic

(1)	Estonian	*Ta*	*rääki-**vat***	*saksa keelt*
	Livonian	*Ta*	*rõkāndi-**ji***	*saksā kīeldõ*
	Latvian	*Viņš*	*runāj-**ot***	*vāciski*
	Lithuanian	*Jis*	*kalb-**ąs***	*vokiškai*
			speak-REP	

'S/he*, reportedly, speaks German'
(*M/F in Finnic, M in Baltic translations)

2. Research questions

RQ1 How can one assess the frequency of use of REP across languages?

RQ2 How do the Circum-Baltic languages rank according to the frequency of use of REP?

3. Methods and data

Assessing the frequency of use of REP in:

- **Parallel translation corpora**
- Comparable corpora
- Translation-based questionnaires

3. Methods and data

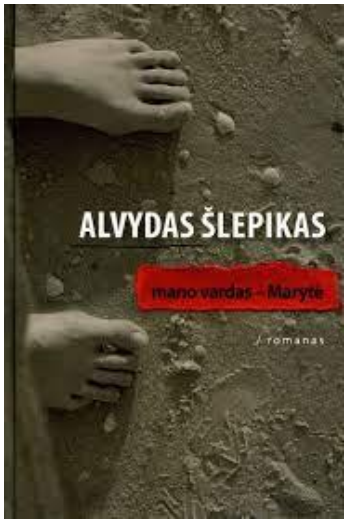
Our pilot study

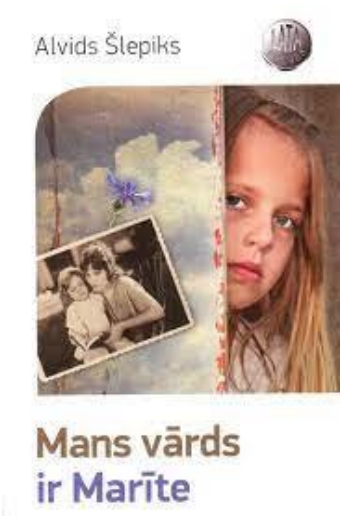
- **Direct fiction translations of one LT novel and two LV novels into EE, LV, and LT**

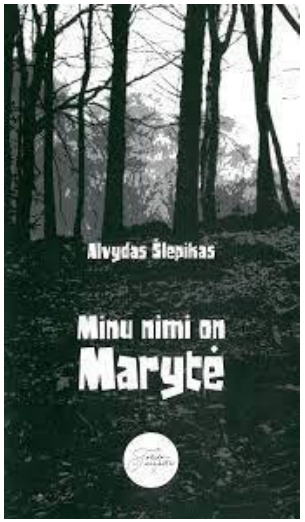
- Obvious shortcoming: no original EE fiction
- Other Baltic and Finnic languages/varieties of the Circum-Baltic area could not be included due to limited number of modern translations

3. Methods and data

- LT novel: **Alvydas Šlepikas, *Mano vardas – Marytė*** (Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla, 2011), translated into LV by Daina Avotiņa (Rīga: Lauku avīze, 2015) and into EE by Tiina Kattel (Tartu: Toledo kirjastus, 2015)

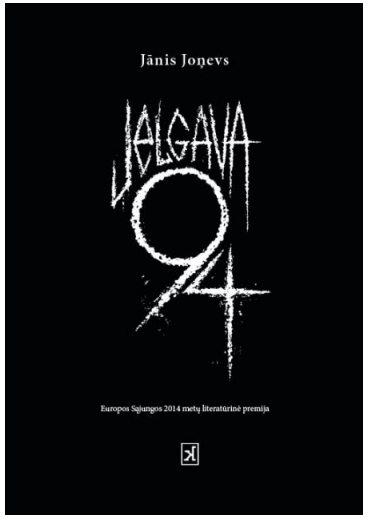






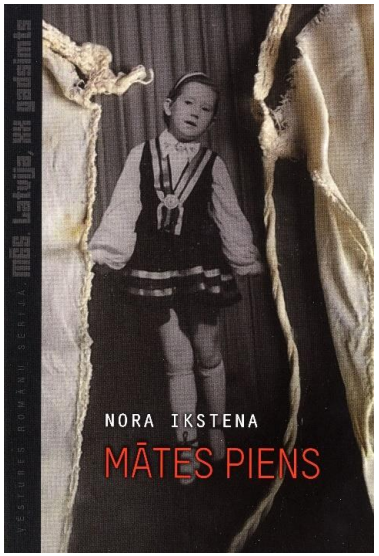
3. Methods and data

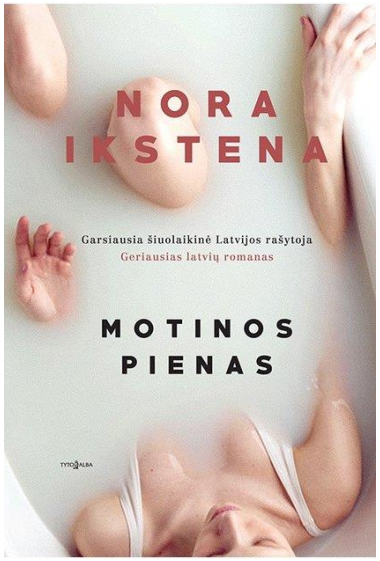
- LV novel 1: **Jānis Joņevs, *Jelgava 94*** (Rīga: Mansards, 2013), translated into LT by Jurgis Banevičius (Vilnius: Kitos knygos, 2018) and into Estonian by Mikk Grins (Muraste: Randvelt Kirjastus, 2017)

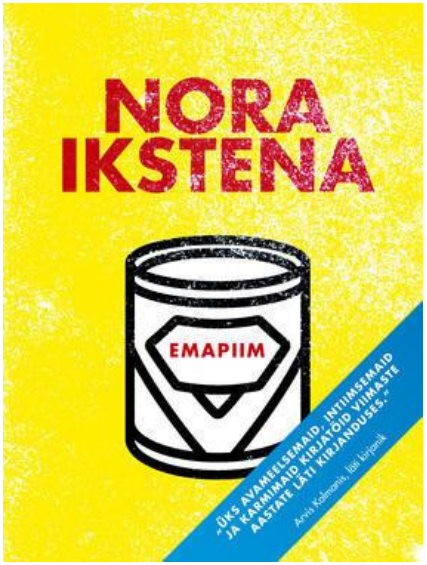


3. Methods and data

- LV novel 2: **Nora Ikstena, *Mātes piens*** (Rīga: Dienas Grāmata, 2015), translated into LT by Laura Laurušaitė (Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2020) and into EE by Ilze Tālberga and Margus Konulla (Tallinn: Kirjastus Hunt, 2018)







3. Methods and data

Compiling the corpus

- Finding the novels with direct translations
- Scanning + OCR (*ABBY FineReader*)
- Manual text alignment by sentence (*MS Excel*)
- Online parallel corpus (*SketchEngine;* for personal use only)

- LT subcorpus (original + translations): 75,489 words
  LV subcorpus (originals + translations): 77,139 words
  EE subcorpus (translations only): 79,590 words

3. Methods and data

Searching for equivalents in translations

- LV search string (suffix): ***ot(ies)**
- EE search string (suffix): ***vat**

- LV search string captures synthetic PRS and FUT REP, EE search string captures synthetic PRS and PST REP. Both LV and EE strings capture REP marked on auxiliaries in periphrastic constructions
- LV **oties* returns reflexive REP forms

3. Methods and data

- LT search strings are more complicated: suffixes with conjugational allomorphy + gender/number marking

(a) ***ąs/*antis** M.SG, ***ą/*antys** M.PL, ***anti** F.SG, ***ančios** F.PL, 1st/3rd conjugation, PRS and FUT REP forms are covered including PRS REP auxiliary 'be'

(b) ***įs/*intis** M.SG, ***į/*intys** M.PL, ***inti** F.SG, ***inčios**, 2nd conjugation, PRS REP forms only

3. Methods and data

- LT search strings are more complicated: suffixes with conjugational allomorphy + gender/number marking

(c) ***ęs** M.SG, ***ę** M.PL, ***usi** F.SG, ***usios** F.PL. PST and PST.HAB REP forms. No conjugational allomorphy, auxiliary ‘be’ is included

3. Methods and data

- Simplifications (limitations) of our searches

(a) Latvian past participles used in constructions without auxiliaries may be also included in the search, but we only accounted for them when they were found via LT and EE searches. Note that bare past participles in Estonian may be also also used to express narrated events (Viitso 2007: 60; Kehayov 2002: 129-130; Kalnača & Lokmane 2021: 243)

(b) LT reflexive forms of non-prefixed verbs were not included

4. Results

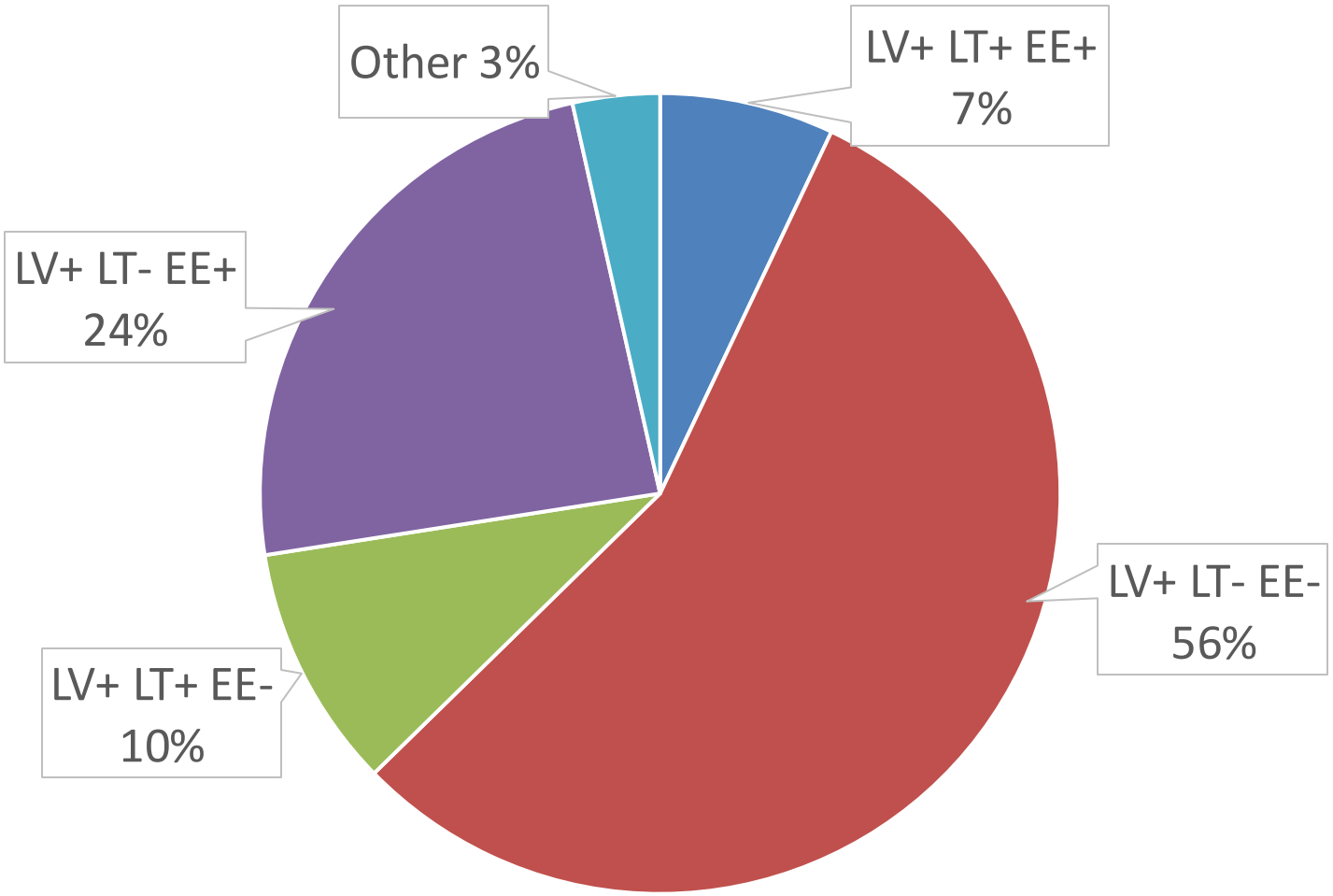
1. Original LV texts → EE, LT
2. Original LT text → EE, LV

4. Results: LV → LT, EE

1. Original LV texts → EE, LT

- Original Latvian texts contain 143 instances of REP
- Estonian translations have 45 cases of REP (31.5%)
- Lithuanian translations have 22 cases of REP (15.4%)

4. Results: LV → LT, EE



4. Results: LV → LT, EE

(2) LV *Visticamāk, mātes vēderā es gulēju pareizi, jo dzemdības* ***es-ot*** ***bij-ušas*** *dabiskas.*

be-PRS.REP be-PST.ACT.PTCP.NOM.PL.F

LT *Motinos pilve aš greičiausiai gulėjau taisyklingai, nes gimdymas* ***buv-ęs*** *natūralus.*

be-PST.ACT.PTCP.NOM.SG.M (as REP)

EE *Tõenäoliselt olin ema kõhus õigetpidi, sest sünnitus* ***ole-vat*** ***ol-nud*** *loomulik.*

be-REP be-PST.PTCP

'Most likely, I was in the correct position in my mother's belly, as the birth **was said to be** natural.' (Ikstena, *Mātes piens*)

4. Results: LT → LV, EE

2. Original LT text → EE, LV

- No REP in the Lithuanian original
- No REP in the Estonian translation
- **33 cases of REP in the Latvian translation**

In our other study focused on LT/LV, two additional LT novels were included where 10 REP forms were found (8 REP forms in *Juodavandeniai* by Ignė Zarambaitė (Vilnius: Nieko rimto, 2020, 28,703 words) and 2 REP forms in *Sukeistas* by Kotryna Zylė (Vilnius: Aukso žuvys, 2019, 32,950 words)

4. Results: LT → LV, EE

(3) LT *Senis sako, kad* ***paim-s*** *ją, tik prašo, kad*
take-FUT.3
mergaitė pašoktų.

LV *Vecais saka, ka viņu* ***paņem-š-ot****, tikai lūdz,*
take-FUT-**REP**
lai meitene padejotu.

EE *Vanamees ütleb, et* ***võta-b*** *ta kaasa,*
take-3SG
ainult palub, et tüdruk tantsiks.

‘The old man says he **will take** her, and just asks the girl to dance a bit.’ (Šlepikas*, Mano vardas – Marytė*)

5. Discussion

RQ1 How can one assess frequency of use of REP across languages?

- Parallel corpora appear to be a useful tool for the study of use of REP

- At present, compilation of EE-LV-LT corpora is quite time-consuming (scanning + OCR + alignment) and limited by available direct translations

5. Discussion

RQ2 How do the Circum-Baltic languages rank according to the frequency of use of REP?

- Our pilot study shows that according to the translations LV → EE, LV → LT, the frequency of use of REP is as follows: LV > EE > LT (143 > 45 > 22)
- The results of translation direction LT → LV, LT → EE also point to the higher frequency of use of REP in LV (33 > 0 = 0)
- Daugavet (2023) also observes that evidentials in Latvian are notably more frequent than in Lithuanian

6. Outlook

- Adding Estonian fiction translated into both LT and LV
- Adding more Lithuanian fiction translated into both LV and EE

- Exploring the possibilities of using indirect translations into EE, LV, LT, e.g., from English with no grammatical evidentiality vs. Bulgarian, Turkish, etc. with grammatical evidentiality

Aitäh, paldies, ačiū!

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