

MONOGRAPHS ON MODERN LINGUISTICS

LITHUANIAN SYNTAX:
A CASE GRAMMAR DESCRIPTION

BY

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語言與文字是人類歷史上最偉大的發明。有了語言，人類纔能超越一切禽獸成爲萬物之靈；有了文字，祖先的文化遺產纔能綿延不絕，相傳到現在。尤有進者，人的思維或推理都以語言爲媒介；因此，如能揭開語言之謎，對於人類之探求至少就可以獲得一半的解答。

中國對於語文的研究有一段悠久而輝煌的歷史，成爲漢學中最受人重視的一環。爲了繼承這光榮的傳統並且繼續予以發揚光大起見，我們準備刊行「現代語言學論叢」。在這個論叢裡，我們有系統地介紹並討論現代語言學的理論與方法，同時運用這些理論與方法，從事國語語音、語法、語意各方面的分析與研究。論叢將分爲兩大類：甲類用國文撰寫，乙類用英文撰寫。我們希望將來還能開闢第三類，以容納國內研究所學生的論文。

在人文科學普遍遭受歧視的今天，「現代語言學論叢」的出版，可以說是一個相當勇敢的嘗試。我們除了感謝臺灣學生書局提供這難得的機會以外，還虔誠地呼籲國內外從事漢語語言學研究的學者不斷給予支持與鼓勵。

湯 廷 池

民國六十五年九月二十九日於臺北

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Case grammar as proposed by Fillmore and modified by Chafe, Anderson and Cook looked promising and challenging for Lithuanian. However, for at least one month I felt as indecisive as Hamlet when I contemplated working on a case grammar of that language. Only after encouraging and stimulating correspondence with Professor Antanas Klimas of the University of Rochester did I stop soliloquizing 'to do or not to do' and begin to focus on the Lithuanian syntax that most interested me. Thus, first of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Klimas for his painstaking corrections and his many insights into linguistics and the Lithuanian language, without which this work could never have become a reality.

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A number of colleagues also helped me. Specifically, I wish to thank Dr. Jing-shing Huang and Dr. Chen-huan Chen for reading the various drafts of the manuscripts and for their warm encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

Lithuanian is indispensable in the study of Indo-European linguistics. But unfortunately, very little work has been done on the grammar of present-day Lithuanian, especially in the case grammar framework. I try to examine whether the case theory as proposed by Fillmore and modified by Chafe, Anderson and Cook is a descriptively adequate framework for a universal grammar which can be applied to Lithuanian, and incorporate the performative hypothesis into the case theory to form a semantically based grammatical model for Lithuanian.

Chapter I outlines case grammar theory in general and its modifications. Chapter II discusses phrase structure rules. Special attention is given to the discussion of case categories, their semantic contents and syntactic relevance. Chapter III deals specifically with the classification of 12 possible Lithuanian verb types in terms of propositional cases that are necessarily found with these verbs. The deep structure configuration and case frame of each type of verb are illustrated. Chapter IV is devoted to the discussion of the realization rules which show how to transform dependency structures into constituency structures and how to relate the deep

to surface structures depicted in Chapters II and III. In Chapter V, an attempt is made to discuss some implications for general case grammar theory, to bring together the various findings, and to indicate some syntactic lacunae in Lithuanian. Finally, I come both to praise case grammar and to 'bury' it as a cornerstone for Lithuanian linguistics.

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INTRODUCTION

0.1 Lithuanian

Lithuanian is the language of the people of Lithuania and of about a million Americans of Lithuanian origin. Along with Latvian and the now extinct Old Prussian, it belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family of languages.

Lithuanian uses the Latin alphabet with some additions and modifications. Today the Lithuanian alphabet contains 32 letters, which are used to express far more than 32 phonemes. The value of a letter depends on many circumstances: length, accent, intonation, etc.

Dambriūnas (1964) indicates that the first Lithuanian books appeared in the 16th century, but the formation of standard Lithuanian began only in 1883, with the appearance of the newspaper "Aušra". Nevertheless, this language is considered the most archaic among all the Indo-European languages spoken today, and very valuable to comparative Indo-European linguistics. In Jonikas (1956:12), it is pointed out that the prominent French linguist Meillet has expressed his opinion by saying, "whoever wants to hear the echo from human lips of what once was the Primitive Indo-European language, he should go and listen to a Lithuanian peasant." Klimas (1969a:66) states:

The preservation of very old and archaic features is very useful for the study of the history and development of related languages. Modern English has changed so much from its Proto-Indo-European background that it does not supply very much evidence for historical and comparative linguistics. Lithuanian, on the other hand, is indispensable in the study of Indo-European linguistics. It is perfectly true that the Lithuanian of 1969 still displays some features in its phonology, morphology, and word-formation, which represent a more archaic layer than the anciently recorded Old Greek, Latin, or Old Indic (Sanskrit).

Lehmann (1973:26-27) also emphasizes the same point by stating:

Modern Lithuanian is remarkable for its conservative pitch accent, inflection, and retention of formal distinctions, especially in the substantive. The word for 'son', sūnus, is like that in Sanskrit, sūnúḥ; eiti 'he goes' has undergone fewer changes than has Latin it. Lithuanian is accordingly one of the most important Indo-European languages for comparative study.

Thus we can reach the definite conclusion that a knowledge of Lithuanian is almost a "must" for any linguist who works in comparative Indo-European linguistics. For detailed discussion, see Dambriūnas (1964) and Klimas (1969b).

0.2 Motive and Method

As all linguists know, different languages express underlying case relationships through various means: inflections (e.g. Latin, Greek and Lithuanian),

prepositions (e.g. English and Chinese), postpositions (e.g. Japanese and Korean), word order, or any combination of these. Such surface devices as these are used to indicate the syntactic functions of subject, direct object, and the like.¹ These functions are not easily defined according to meaning. A subject, for example, can be the agent that performs an action, a person or thing that is described, an instrument that is used in an action, or even the receiver of the action. This difficulty is apparent in (1) (a)-(e):

- (1) (a) The boy slapped the girl.
- (b) This gas tank holds 18 gallons.
- (c) The boy has a toothache.
- (d) This dress irons easily.
- (e) The boy (=His appearance) shocked me.

No satisfactory statement has been made about the meaning of the subject, but the form it takes in surface structures is clear. If we define the direct object as the receiver of the action, we find an array of problems as great as those for defining the subject. Each of the underlined noun phrases in (2) (a)-(e) seems to be the receiver of the action, but not all of them are direct objects:

- (2) (a) A rock hit John.
- (b) John was hit by a rock.
- (c) His foot got caught in the door.
- (d) Tom felt a thump on his ear.
- (e) The glass broke.

Doubtless, much of our difficulty in assigning meaning to functions such as subject and object is that we are relying too heavily upon surface manifestations. In the late 1960s, a new approach to transformational grammar emerged, case grammar as proposed by Charles Fillmore. This new development and others of a similar nature showed that the underlying structures which had previously been provided for sentences were too close to the surface and that there should be something underlying them. For further details, refer to Chapter 1.

Since the advent of case grammar, many Ph.D. candidates in linguistics have been adopting with interest either the Fillmorean case theory or the Chafian semantic theory as their theoretical framework in grammatical analysis for their dissertations. So far as I know, the syntax of the five official languages of the United Nations—Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish—have been studied and presented.² They all showed that case theory may greatly simplify the grammatical description, and at the same time offer satisfactory explanations for a number of semantically relevant syntactic facts in natural language.

Although Lithuanian is useful and indispensable in the study of Indo-European linguistics, it is regrettable that to the best of my knowledge, almost no studies on the grammar of Lithuanian using the case grammar approach

have been made in the field of linguistics. There is an obvious need, therefore, for a linguist familiar with Lithuanian to collect what seems to be a comprehensive sample of linguistic data to account for the syntactic function of arguments in relation to the verbs in the Lithuanian sentence, and to formulate some realization rules to derive surface structures from deep structures.

Case grammar has undergone a number of significant modifications, not only by Fillmore but in the works of linguists such as Chafe, Anderson, and Cook. These linguists have developed theories which both complement the Fillmore models and answer some of the questions inherent in them such as those concerning the analyses of nominalizations, predicate nominals, the relation of conflated case frames to basic semantic concepts such as state, process and action, and notions of covert roles. The case grammar model used in this study is based on the work of Charles Fillmore (1966, 1968, 1971), Wallace Chafe (1970), and John Anderson (1971), and developed in a series of articles by Cook (1979). In brief, the aim of this study is to examine whether the case theory as proposed by Fillmore and modified by other linguists is a descriptively adequate framework for a universal grammar which can be applied to Lithuanian. The classification of verbs in Lithuanian in terms of verb type and configurations of case relations is described and presented. Various realization rules are suggested along

the way as needed, primarily to explain unusual subject/object choices.

0.3 Working Outline

The contents and organization of this work are as follows: Chapter I deals with case grammar theory in general and outlines the salient points of three significant models with respect to the Fillmore models (1968-1971). Chapter II discusses base rules. Special attention is given to the discussion of case categories, their semantic contents and syntactic relevance. Chapter III deals specifically with the classification of verbs in terms of verb type and configurations of case relations. I aim to present a clear and simple method of classifying Lithuanian verbs in accordance with two criteria: (1) the verb type, and (2) the semantic roles implied by the verb. Morphologically related verbs are grouped under one entry in the lexicon. Derived forms are enumerated as subentries. Derivational relations between the forms are manifested by the inclusion of the derivational units. Chapter IV is devoted to the discussion of the realization rules relating the deep to surface structures described in Chapters II and III. Finally, in Chapter V, an attempt is made to discuss some implications for general case grammar theory, to bring together the various findings, and to summarize their significance for Lithuanian grammar in terms of the framework constructed in this study.

There are many issues that are unsolved in the area of Lithuanian stress and intonation.³ For the sake of neatness, stress marks do not appear in this work.

0.4 Corpus

The corpus used in this study is taken partly from the following dictionary, periodicals and reference books:

- a. Clair, Robert. 1973. "Lithuanian Verb Morphology," Linguistics 98:68-87.
- b. Dambriūnas, Leonardas., Antanas Klimas and William R. Schmalstieg. 1972. Introduction to Modern Lithuanian. New York: Brooklyn, Franciscan Fathers Press.
- c. Darden, Bill J. 1973. "Indirect Speech and Reported Speech in Lithuanian and Bulgarian," You Take the High Node and I'll Take the Low Node; Papers from the Comparative Syntax Festival, pp. 326-332.
- d. Klimas, Antanas and William R. Schmalstieg. 1967. Lithuanian Reader for Self-Instruction. New York: Brooklyn, Franciscan Fathers Press.
- _____, and Stasys Barzdukas (eds.) 1974a. Lithuanian Dictionary. Chicago: Lithuanian Educational Council of the U.S.A., Inc.
- _____. 1974b. "Studies on Word-Formation in Lithuanian," Lituanus 20(3): 49-72.
- e. Lišauskas, Šarūnas. 1976. "Objects of Negated Verbs in Lithuanian," in Papers from the 12th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, pp. 459-467.
- f. Matthews, W.K. 1955. "Lithuanian Constructions with Neuter Passive Participles," Slavonic and East European Review 33:350-371.
- _____. 1957. "The Affinities and Structure of Lithuanian," Slavonic and East European Review 35: 40-73.

- g. Maxwell, Edward. 1971. "Aspects of Lithuanian Complementation," Papers in Linguistics 4:169-195.
- h. Valeika. L. 1975. "Semantic Sentence-Types in Lithuanian and English," Kalbotyra xxvi (3): 51-63.

In addition, I use as sources my notes on conversations with Professor Antanas Klimas of the University of Rochester, a native Lithuanian.

0.5 Speculative Conclusion

A general classification of Lithuanian verbs is possible in terms of both the basic verb type and the nuclear semantic roles involved. The basic verb types—states, processes, and action-processes⁴—are probably generally present in the verb system of all languages. It is likely that case notions in this work or in the work of other case grammarians are more or less universal to language. There is no doubt that the case theory still contains some shortcomings. In addition, I can predict that there remain a number of unsolved problems resulting from the application of the theory to Lithuanian.

It is hoped that this study of case in Lithuanian grammar may be both a step toward proving the theory of case as a universal grammatical base and a useful and efficient way to deal with the functions of noun phrases in relation to the verbs in modern Lithuanian.