

**Miina Norvik, Future Time Reference Devices in Livonian in Finnic Context, Tartu 2015 (Dissertationes Linguisticae Universitatis Tartuensis 25). 226 pp.**

Miina Norvik's research paper is devoted to a survey of the means of expression of the verb in the future tense and its interpretation in Finnic language material. The research paper is Miina Norvik's doctoral dissertation, which she successfully defended on November 12, 2015, thus earning her doctoral degree.

The Livonian language has been chosen as the main language of analysis, while its factual data have been compared not only to the linguistically well analysed Estonian and Finnish languages, but also to Karelian, Veps, Ingrian, Votic and other Finnic languages and their varieties. The theoretical analysis of the future addresses not only the tense category of the verb, but also the modal and aspectual meanings of its expression.

This kind of broad view on the semantics and function of the means of future reference used in the Finnic languages is very important, because, as has been repeatedly mentioned in the study, these languages do not have any grammaticalized, that is, morphological forms for the expression of future. The meaning of the future is expressed with the help of present tense forms in a particular context, as well as by periphrastic constructions, including an infinitive or participle next to the verb meaning 'be', or to a verb with a modal or phasal meaning.

As has been pointed out by the author of the research, every Finnic language she analysed possessed at least one such construction which in a particular context can express the meaning of the future. The description of this kind of constructions in Miina Norvik's dissertation seems a good start for a discussion of a morpho-syntactic nature — what is the status of the finite verb in this kind of constructions, whether it is a copula or the so called semi-copula/quasi-copula or compound predicate, that is, to what extent we can talk about the level of grammaticalization of the finite verb. Although a full grammaticalization of the constructions, according to the

author, cannot be found in any of the Finnic languages she has discussed, not even Livonian, the author has chosen to classify the finite verb as copula in the construction with the infinitive.

One has to admit that the theoretical basis of the research has been successfully balanced with the analysis of empirical material, because

- (1) in the introduction the author has explicitly defined the theoretical principles underlying her study, which are the functional-typological approach to the language material and the grammaticalization theory;
- (2) the theoretical principles have been skilfully applied in the description of the means of expression of the future in Livonian and other languages;
- (3) the empirical material has been partially viewed in the context of tense, aspect and modality of the Indo-European languages, to account for the traces of continuous contacts between the Livonian and Latvian languages, as well as for Karelian and Votic contacts with the Russian language;
- (4) the four publications of the author included in the research reveal a meticulous discussion of the devices of future reference from four different points of view, which allows the reader to appreciate the development of the author's ideas in the analysis of the linguistic material.

And, of course, it is a source of profound pleasure that the object of research of Miina Norvik is Livonian — a Finnic language, which in spite of its ancient roots and varieties has not been well documented until the 19th century and which nowadays, unfortunately, finds itself on the brink of extinction. In addition, the description of the Livonian grammatical system in general and the system of the forms and functions of the verb in particular are vitally important not only in the context of Finnic languages, which belong to the Finno-Ugric language family,

but also for the histories of Baltic, and thus also Indo-European languages.

As the author of the study points out in the findings of her research, her results on future reference in Livonian and other Finnic languages should be considered as data for further studies in the context of contact languages. In the case of Livonian, there is an obvious need for a comparative analysis of the data with the Latvian language. Although the current research contains several cases of such analysis, the Livonian language possesses a more or less grammaticalized means of future reference (the copula *lidō* in the construction with the infinitive or the active or passive participle) rather directly indicates some cross-linguistic parallels with the Latvian verb system.

Although in Latvian, that is in the Baltic languages, in contrast to, for example, Germanic or Slavic languages, the means of expression of the future have been fully grammaticalized in the form of suffixes, and the future does not *a priori* contain the meaning of modality or aspect, nevertheless, the Livonian forms of the future in their functional use display a certain similarity with the Latvian language, which distinguishes it from the rest of the Finnic languages.

The Livonian constructions with *lidō* are primarily focused on the expression of the future, while the modal (epistemic) meaning is secondary, occurring in particular contexts (a similar epistemic use of the future forms also can be observed in Latvian and Lithuanian (see, e.g., Lithuanian Grammar 1997 : 247–249; Latviešu valodas gramatika 2013 : 500)).

The impact of the Latvian verb system on Livonian deserves a separate study, taking into account that the Livonians have been bilingual for a substantially long time, using both the Livonian as well as Latvian languages. Since Latvian, in contrast to Finno-Ugric languages, features an elaborate system of verb tenses, moods, voices and their functions, it could not avoid affecting the Livonian speakers, creating various morphosyntactic interferences in the development as well as use of its forms and constructions.

Besides an elaborate system of verb forms, the Latvian language makes use of a variety of different modal constructions, expressing deontic or epistemic modality. Depending on the form of the subject, these constructions can be of two types (Latviešu valodas gramatika 2013 : 489–491, 515):

1) using the indirect subject DAT +

a) the copula *bija/būs* + infinitive

*Ko man bija iesākt?*  
what.ACC I.DAT be.PST.3 do.INF  
'What could I do?'

*Ko man tagad būs darīt?*  
what.ACC I.DAT now be.FUT.3 do.INF  
'What should I do?'

b) the infinitive

*Ko man darīt?*  
what.ACC I.DAT do.INF  
'What to do?'

c) the modal verb + infinitive

*Man gribas ēst!*  
I.DAT want.PRS.3 eat.INF  
'I am hungry!'

d) the copula *ir/bija/būs* + passive present participle

*Man šodien ir tīrāma māja*  
I.DAT today be.COP.PRS.3 clean.PTCP.PRS.PASS.NOM.F house.NOM.F  
'I have a house to clean today'

2) using the subject NOM + modal verb + infinitive

*Tagad es varu atpūsties*  
Now I.NOM can.PRS.1SG rest.INF  
'Now I can rest'

We have to admit that in Latvian grammar descriptions the constructions structured as modal or phase verb + infinitive are not usually considered as predicates with a copula, but are treated as compound predicates (Latviešu valodas gramatika 2013 : 468–470, 718–719), because the verb in the finite form has not been grammaticalized far enough to lose its lexical meaning when used in different tense or aspect forms.

All these constructions have their counterparts in Miina Norvik's material of the analysed Livonian data, the construction with indirect subject DAT + copula *bija/būs* + infinitive in particular, which is common in contemporary spoken

Latvian, but which was previously widely used across all registers (Latviešu valodas gramatika 2013 : 490), and therefore it could be discussed in the context of the future forms of the Livonian verb.

Therefore it is slightly surprising to see such a construction as subject NOM + *būt*<sub>FUT</sub> + infinitive mentioned by the author concerning Salaca Livonian (Norvik 2015 : 135):

*Es tev būšu palīdzēt*  
 I.NOM you.DAT be.FUT.1SG help.INF  
 'I will help you' (quoted from Endzelin 1922 : 665).

It was discussed already by Endzelins (1922 : 665–666; 1951 : 859–860; see also Gāters 1993 : 303–304) referring to him while discussing the same constructions) and it was considered by both authors as the influence of Russian that has only been observed in a small number of folk songs. Moreover, this construction has been found only in the first and second person singular forms, which means that its use is formally limited, and in addition it is not familiar in modern Latvian at all. Therefore we should not consider (or suggest to anybody else) that Latvian language possesses two types of expressions for the future — a synthetic one using the suffix *-š/-s-* and a periphrastic one with *būt*<sub>FUT</sub> + infinitive. Furthermore, we should also question the possibility that this construction could have originated in the Latvian language and could thus be considered as the source construction for one of the future time references in Salaca Livonian.

The differences between the stative and dynamic meanings of the future infinitive and participle constructions in Livonian should also be compared with the Latvian passive and active voice constructions. Notably, the Latvian passive constructions differentiate clearly between the stative and dynamic meanings as defined by the lexical differences of the auxiliaries — the dynamic meaning with *tikt* 'get' (formerly also *tapt* and *klūt* 'get') is used in the indefinite tense forms, while the stative meaning with *būt* 'be' is used for the perfect tenses (e.g., Latviešu valodas gramatika 2013 : 505–506;

see also Kalnača, Lokmane 2015). In addition, the Latvian language also has some marginally active tense forms *tiku gājis* 'had gone', *tikām lasījuši* 'had read' and alike, marking the dynamic perfect form in contrast to the stative perfect *biju gājis* 'had gone', *bijām lasījuši* 'had read' (Latviešu valodas gramatika 2013 : 479–480).

In future it is important that Miina Norvik's research on the means of expression of the future meaning in Livonian and other Finno-Ugric languages should address the following issues:

- 1) Why does the author consider the Livonian future forming construction *līdō* to be not sufficiently grammaticalized, in spite of its copula function?
- 2) Which means of expression of the future in Finnic languages should be considered as central, which peripheral, and why?
- 3) Which meaning (discussed in the paper) — tense or modality — is dominant in the means of expression of the future?
- 4) Do the Finnic languages in general, and Livonian in particular, have a direct correlation between the meanings of aspect and modality?

Miina Norvik's dissertation, as was stated before, is a meticulous, fundamental and comprehensive research paper on the means of expression of the future in Livonian and other Finnic languages. The empirical part of the paper presents a skilful analysis of very complex and often clashing opinions on the tense, aspect and modal meanings, their interaction and historical development as discussed by different linguists. Furthermore, the question of the types of predicates and the elements forming the predicates (copulas, auxiliaries, modal verbs, their polarity and zero forms) has been traditionally considered as the most challenging in morphosyntax. Therefore, the lightness of touch of the author in analysing all the aspects and supporting them with the facts of the Finno-Ugric languages is admirable. The Livonian language has only benefited from such a comprehensive theoretical and empirical analysis, being able to provide different facts for analysis, thus proving itself

as a rich basis for further functional and typological comparative analysis with the Baltic languages and different aspects of their verb systems.

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**Abbreviations**

**1** — person, **ACC** — accusative, **DAT** — dative, **FUT** — future, **INF** — infinitive, **NOM** — nominative, **PRS** — present, **PST** — past, **SG** — singular.

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