

Absentives or ambidirectionals? Motion-cum-purpose constructions with ‘be’ and the infinitive in Baltic and elsewhere

AXEL HOLVOET & VAIVA ŽEIMANTIENĖ
Vilnius University

The present article introduces the ambidirectional, a construction (or sometimes just a distinct type of use of a gram basically serving another function) referring to two-way motion events in the past. The discussion starts out from the notion of absentive, which has already established itself in the literature since de Groot (2000). In many languages the construction ‘be’ + INF, claimed to be an absentive, exists only in a past-tense variety. It is argued that such constructions do not meet the definitional criteria for absentives. We here propose to describe them as ambidirectionals, by which we understand a construction (or a specific type of use of a gram with a broader array of functions) denoting two-way motion-cum-purpose events in the past. The absentive can be characterised as a particular type of use of an ambidirectional construction, which allows different focusing: either a holistic view is given of the motion event or its outward point is focused upon, and in the latter case the presence of an external observer yields the absentive interpretation. The fact that the constructions involved are basically ambidirectional explains why in many languages they are restricted to the past, while other languages allow occasional or regular extensions to the domain of the present.

Keywords: absentive, ambidirectional, motion verb, motion event, pluperfect

1. Introduction¹

De Groot (2000) defines a cross-linguistically identifiable construction type which he calls the absentive. He does not associate it with one specific syntactic structure or with specific morphosyntactic features (several formal

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types are distinguished) but provides a uniform functional characterisation: the absentive refers to the absence of a certain person from what is called the ‘deictic centre’ (a not fully satisfactory notion we will expand upon later), this absence being caused by the person in question engaging in a certain type of activity denoted by a verb or deverbative form occurring in the construction; when an absentive is used, it is usually understood (though this is not strictly linguistically encoded) that the person will return to the deictic centre after a spell of activity. The construction can be exemplified with the following German example:

(1) German

<i>Anna</i>	<i>ist</i>	<i>schwimmen.</i>
PN	be.PRS.3SG	swim.INF

‘Anna has gone swimming.’, ‘Anna is off swimming.’

It is in German scholarship that most attention has been paid to the absentive. Part of the literature centres on problems of German descriptive grammar and on whether, from a language-internal perspective, the absentive really deserves to be singled out as a *sui generis* grammatical category, with some authors arguing it can be viewed as a semantically compositional syntactic variety of a copular construction (Abraham 2007, Fortmann & Wöllstein 2013, Wöllstein 2013). We will comment on compositionality here and there in the article. We will concentrate, however, on the cross-linguistic aspects, more specifically on the question whether what in a number of European languages has been identified as an absentive really meets the definitional features proposed for this construction by de Groot. Vogel (2007) extends the scope of de Groot’s investigation (which was restricted to a number of Germanic and Romance languages and Hungarian) to a larger group of European languages and singles out a number of languages with what she calls a partial absentive (*Teilabsentiv*), viz. an absentive restricted to the past, as opposed to languages with both past and present varieties together making up a ‘full absentive’ (*Vollabsentiv*). Lithuanian and Latvian are among the former:

(2) Lithuanian

<i>Buvau</i>	<i>grybauti.</i>
be.PST.1SG	pick.mushrooms.INF

‘I’ve been picking mushrooms.’

(3) **Ona*

<i>yra</i>	<i>grybauti.</i>
PN.NOM	be.PRS.3 pick.mushrooms.INF

‘Anna is out, picking mushrooms.’

- (4) Latvian
Bērni *bija* *peldēties* *ezerā.*
 child.NOM.PL be.PST.3 swim.INF lake.LOC.SG
 ‘The children have been swimming in the lake.’
- (5) **Bērni* *ir* *peldēties* *ezerā.*
 child.NOM.PL be.PRS.3 swim.INF lake.LOC.SG
 ‘The children have gone swimming in the lake.’

Vogel suggests that the explanation for the restriction of absentives to past time reference could be associated with the notion of return to the deictic centre. As a past-tense absentive implies that this return has already taken place, whereas its present-tense counterpart merely suggests that this return is somehow expected, a present-tense absentive is, as Vogel puts it, “a bad absentive” (2007, 263).

On the basis of de Groot’s definition of the absentive it is far from obvious that a present-tense absentive should be a less prototypical absentive, as Vogel suggests. If the absence of a person from the deictic centre at a certain moment (which we could formulate as reference time *R*) is the central meaning of the absentive, then it should not greatly matter whether this reference time is located in the past or whether it coincides with speech time. A situation of absence holding in the present can be backshifted to the past, and the absence of a person from a deictic centre can be stated for any moment in the past as well as it can for the present. On the other hand, not every situation described by a past-tense form can be shifted to the present, e.g., perfective past-tense forms usually have no perfective present-tense equivalents, habitual pasts often have no present-tense counterparts (thus English *used to play golf* has no present tense **uses to play golf*) etc. If, in a number of languages, we find past-tense ‘absentives’ that have no present-tense counterparts, there must be a good reason for this. In this article we will argue that the reason is they are not really absentives in the sense defined by de Groot. For describing them we will introduce the term ‘ambidirectional’. We define ambidirectionals as constructions, or specific types of use of grams with other basic meanings, describing two-way motion-cum-purpose in the past. We suggest that in some languages such constructions may extend in a regular way to the present tense, resulting in what de Groot describes as the absentive, whereas in other languages this extension occurs only sporadically or not at all. Among constructions that have been claimed to be absentive, some

do not involve motion (they combine the putative absentive meaning with progressive meaning), and we raise no claims with regard to them. We are thus not denying the existence of absentives in the sense of de Groot; what we will be arguing is that there is a group of two-way motion constructions basically restricted to the past, whose present-tense extensions have been inadequately characterised as absentives.

The structure of the article is as follows. First, we will take a closer look at a language that has (basically) only a past-tense absentive of the type 'be' + INF, viz. Lithuanian (adding a few notes on its close cognate Latvian), and we will characterise its basic features and the different types of context in which it may be used. We will also attempt to characterise the occasional extensions of the Lithuanian constructions 'be' + INF into the domain of the present. We will then compare the Lithuanian construction with the German absentive to show that the Lithuanian construction does not essentially differ from the German one, though the latter has more uses conforming to de Groot's definition of the absentive. The notion of ambidirectional is proposed for what has hitherto been described as past-tense absentives, and instances of two-way motion-cum-purpose constructions (usage types) of different origin, also basically or exclusively restricted to the past, are cited from other languages as parallels.

2. The Lithuanian construction *buvo* + INF

We will start with a description of the Lithuanian construction 'be' + INF, the structural counterpart of the German structure in (1). We will pay particular attention to the question whether the features which de Groot lists as definitional features of the absentive can be observed. This section owes a lot to Žeimantiėnė (2018), a contrastive study of German and Lithuanian constructions of the type 'be' + INF.

2.1. Deictic centre and direction of motion

In the absentive, the subject must be absent from what de Groot calls the deictic centre.

This notion is intuitively more or less clear, but a definition, which is lacking in de Groot's article, would be useful. Translated into motion terms, our construction should encode motion away from the location of an observer stating the absence of a person. Such a situation is reflected in (6):

(6) Lithuanian (CCLL)

Monika pasiteiravo, kur buvau dingusi,
 PN.NOM inquire.PST.3 where be.PST.1SG disappear.PPA.NOM.SG.F
ir aš atsakiau, kad buvau
 and 1SG.NOM answer.PST.1SG that be.PST.1SG
pasivaikščioti.
go.for.a.walk.INF

‘Monika inquired where I had been, and I answered I had been for a walk.’

Here the location of the person called Monika is a point of observation from which another person’s (the speaker’s) location is characterised. However, the problematic nature of the notion becomes clear in examples like (7) and (8), which describe motion towards what is presumably the deictic centre, in this case the location of a person who is both speaker and observer:

(7) Lithuanian (CCLL)

Buvo kaimynė pasimatuoti. Jau
be.PST.3 neighbour.NOM.SG try.on.INF already
išėjo.
 leave.PST.3

‘The neighbour was [here] for the trying on. She has left already.’

(8) Lithuanian (CCLL)

[*Šneka apie kažkokius balus,*
o pas mus niekas nebuvo pasižiūrėti
 but at 1PL.ACC nobody.NOM NEG.be.PST.3 look.INF
kaip gyvename.
 how live.PRS.1PL

‘[They’re talking about some preferential points [for allocating aid]], but nobody has been at our place to look at how we live.’

In the situations here referred to the subjects involved were, during the activities referred to by the infinitive, at the location where the speaker-observer was, or at the speaker-observer’s dwelling place; they were, at that moment, absent from their usual location, i.e., her home in the neighbour’s case in (7), or the institution represented by the social workers in (8). We can see, first, that the observer need not coincide with the speaker, and that it is ultimately the observer, not necessarily the speaker, who is crucial for defining the ‘absence’. Furthermore, the notion of absentive as defined from the perspective of an observer is problematic if we stipulate

that the activity denoted by the infinitive should be away from the deictic centre, i.e., the observer's location. Still, we could retain this notion with the proviso that in the past-tense two-way motion construction the motion may be either away from the deictic centre and back, or to the deictic centre and back. In some cases, however, neither the starting and ending point of the two-way motion nor the outward point is in an obvious way a deictic centre in the sense of an obvious location for the observer. Compare the following:

(9) Lithuanian

<i>Tą</i>	<i>dieną</i>	<i>T.</i>	<i>visą</i>	<i>dieną</i>	<i>dirbo</i>
DEM.ACC.SG	day.ACC.SG		all.ACC.SG	day.ACC.SG	work.PST.3
<i>traktoriumi</i>	<i>laukuose,</i>	<i>apie</i>	<i>13 val.</i>	<i>buvo</i>	
tractor.INS.SG	field.LOC.PL	about	hour	be.PST.3	
<i>papietauti,</i>	<i>apie</i>	<i>14 val.</i>	<i>vėl</i>	<i>išvyko</i>	<i>į</i>
have.lunch.INF	about	hour	again	depart.PST.3	to
<i>laukus.</i>					
field.ACC.PL					

'On that day T. worked the whole day in the fields with his tractor, at 1 p.m. he went (home?) to have lunch, about 2 p.m. he went into the fields again.'²

In this case it is not quite clear where the deictic centre should be: the farmer's home should be eligible for this status, but as he is working in the fields the whole day, the fields become the default location serving as a starting and ending point for two-way motion. In what follows, we will use the term **default location** instead of deictic centre. By default location we mean a location that is, within a certain relevant time frame, more stable and less obviously temporary than the goal of motion, such as the fields where the farmer in (9) is working within the time frame of his day of work. But the notion of default location applies to the character of the motion event, while the location of the observer is another matter. The observer may be distinct from the mover-subject, as is clearly the case in (6), (7) and (8), but this is not necessarily the case, as we will see below. We will therefore, in addition to 'default location', introduce the notion of 'external observer', which is crucial for what has been described as the absentive.

² eteismai.lt/byla/14035955318771/N1-67-366/2011, accessed January 29, 2019.

2.2. Stativity and aspect

De Groot states that the absentive is a stative construction, i.e. it refers to the state of a person's being absent for the activity specified by the infinitive or deverbal noun. As a piece of evidence for this claim he cites the fact that in Hungarian the infinitive must be imperfective, because 'when using the absentive, reference is made to a point in time within the state of affairs designated by the verb' (de Groot 2000, 705). De Groot illustrates this with the following example:

- (10) Hungarian (de Groot 2000, 704–705, original glosses)
- a. *Zsuzsa a leckét írni van.*
 Zsuzsa the lesson.ACC **write.INF** is
 'Zsuzsa is off doing her homework.'
- b. **Zsuzsa a leckét van meg-írni.*
 Zsuzsa the lesson.ACC is **PFV-write.INF**
 'Zsuzsa is off doing her homework.'

De Groot's reasoning is not necessarily compelling because the state referred to by the whole absentive construction (*viz.* the state of absence of the subject from what is called the deictic centre) can be set apart from the purpose. As de Groot himself points out, the absentive construction allows for interpretations where the event constituting the purpose of the absence has not yet begun or has already ended. The event itself may be quite brief, like posting a letter, while the absence is considerably longer. Still, the ban on perfective infinitives in Hungarian calls for an explanation. Presumably the absentive construction often refers to a common or familiar type of activity (pastime) extending over a relatively long time, so that the duration of the activity and the duration of the absence will be perceived as roughly comparable if not identical. This could create a default assumption to the effect that the 'point in time' mentioned by de Groot must also be within the time interval occupied by the activity. That the subject in (1) is swimming at reference time is no more than a pragmatic inference, but it might have some influence on the aspectual properties of the construction.

However, this ban on perfectives seems to be an idiosyncratic feature of Hungarian. Lithuanian shows no trace of it. Admittedly, aspect is weakly grammaticalised in the Baltic languages, and some authors deny its existence altogether, but as Dahl (1985, 89) observes, even in Slavonic

the aspects are basically ‘grammaticalised lexical classes’, and the same applies to Baltic. In Baltic, perfectivisation through prefixation affects the grammatical behaviour of a verb less radically than in Slavonic, but a large number of prefixed verbs lose the capacity of being used in a progressive sense. Verbal aspect as instantiated in Slavonic and Baltic is, at any rate, closely bound up with the lexical properties of verbs; therefore we will first discuss lexical input and then return to aspect.

2.3. Lexical input

This section focuses on the lexical classes of verbs occurring in the construction *buvo* + INF and their aspectual properties. Several groups can be distinguished:

- verbs denoting sports and pastimes, such as *maudytis* ‘bathe’, *plaukioti* ‘swim’, *šokti* ‘dance’, *sportuoti* ‘do sport’, *treniruotis* ‘train’, *bėgioti* ‘jog’, *nardyti* ‘dive’, *buruoti* ‘sail’, *čiuožinėti* ‘ice skate’, *slidinėti* ‘ski’, *karstyti* ‘climb’, *žaisti* ‘play’, *keliuoti* ‘travel’, *pasikaitinti* ‘sunbathe’, *vaikščioti* ‘go for a walk’, *grybauti* ‘pick mushrooms’, *uogauti* ‘pick berries’, *žvejoti* ‘fish’, *meškertoti* ‘fish, angle’, *šaudyti* ‘shoot’;
- denoting everyday activities and rest from activities, e.g., like *valgyti* ‘eat’, *pietauti* ‘have lunch’, *pusryčiauti* ‘have breakfast’, *vakarienauti* ‘have dinner’, *rūkyti* ‘smoke’, *dirbti* ‘work’, *melstis* ‘pray’, *vairuoti* ‘drive, take driving lessons’, *ilsėtis* ‘take a rest’ etc.;
- short-duration social, commercial, customer-service or domestic routine situations, e.g., *apžiūrėti* ‘inspect’, *pakalbėti* ‘talk something over’, *aplankyti* ‘visit’, *balsuoti* ‘vote’, *apsikirpti* ‘have one’s hair cut’, *pirkti* ‘buy’, *išsikeisti* ‘swap, change’, *sumokėti* ‘pay’, *pasima-tuoti* ‘try on’, *pasiimti* ‘pick up’, *parsinešti* ‘bring back’, ‘fetch’, *pavedžioti* ‘walk (a dog)’, *pašerti* ‘feed (animals)’, *palesinti* ‘feed (birds)’, *pasirinkti* ‘pick (berries etc.)’, etc.

This list (based on a sample of 117 sentences with 50 different verbs) is not exhaustive and gives only a general idea of the lexical distribution of our construction. The starting point for the search of Lithuanian examples was a list of 43 different German verbs used in the absentive given by König (2009, 47). This German sample was extracted from a database with progressive constructions based on a sample with 589 different verbs

from the COSMAS-II-Corpus. An expanded version of this database with morphological tagging (Engelberg *et al.* 2013) is accessible for further research. The accessible Lithuanian corpora are of limited help because of the lack of distinctive formal features facilitating a search in a corpus. The Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian yielded only 17 examples; 100 more were found through Google, mostly from forums but also from press articles and court proceedings.

The lexical input comprises both telic predicates like *apsikirpti* ‘have one’s hair cut, get a hairdo’ and atelic predicates like *slidinėti* ‘ski’. Both atelic and telic verbs can be perfectivised. In the case of atelic verbs perfectivisation is usually delimitative, that is, a prefix *pa-* is added to the verb, which does not render the verb telic but singles out an arbitrarily delimited time interval filled with the state or activity denoted by the verb:

- (11) Lithuanian (CCLL)
Ten aš buvau vieną kartą žiemos metu
 there 1SG.NOM **be.PST.1SG** once winter.GEN.SG time.INS.SG
slidinėti su šeima ir draugais.
ski.INF with family.INS.SG and friend.INS.PL
 ‘I was there once for skiing in the winter together with my family and friends.’
- (12) Lithuanian
Vakar buvom pa-slidinėti.
 yesterday **be.PST.1PL** **DELIM-ski.INF**
 ‘We went skiing yesterday.’³

As one can see, in the case of activity verbs, both the unbounded simple verbs and the delimitative perfectivised verbs can be used in our construction. One doesn’t see any clear predominance of either imperfective state or activity verbs or their perfective delimitative modifications, e.g., one finds, without obvious preference, *slidinėti* ‘ski’ and *paslidinėti* ‘spend some time skiing’, *nardyti* ‘dive’ and *panardyti* ‘spend some time diving’, *šokti* ‘dance’ and *pašokti* ‘spend some time dancing’ etc.

But delimitatives are not the only class of perfective verbs occurring in our construction: one also finds telic verbs. One and the same verb can, of course, be atelic or telic according to the construction in which it occurs.

³ http://www.sniegozona.lt/?p=72&mod=forum&act=view_topic&id=195, accessed January 29, 2019.

The verb *skinti* ‘pick’, for instance, can be an activity verb if used with an unbounded object, as in *skinti obuolius* ‘pick apples’, or telic with a bounded object, as in *skinti obuolį* ‘pick an apple’. The perfective counterparts are *pasiskinti* ‘spend a certain time picking (fruit)’ and *nusiskinti* ‘pick (one piece of fruit)’:

- (13) Lithuanian (constructed)⁴
- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| a. | <i>buvau</i> | <i>skinti</i> | <i>obuolių</i> | |
| | be.PST.1SG | pick.INF | apple.GEN.PL | |
| | ‘I’ve been out to pick apples.’ | | | |
| | | | | |
| b. | <i>buvau</i> | <i>pa-si-skinti</i> | <i>obuolių</i> | |
| | be.PST.1SG | DELIM-RFL-pick.INF | apple.GEN.PL | |
| | ‘I’ve been out to pick apples.’ | | | |
| | | | | |
| c. | <i>buvau</i> | <i>nu-si-skinti</i> | <i>obuolio</i> | |
| | be.PST.1SG | TEL-RFL-pick.INF | apple.GEN.SG | |
| | ‘I’ve been out to pick an apple.’ | | | |

This shows that the event or activity constituting the purpose of motion can be conceptualised in different ways, and the choice is not determined by the aspectual properties of the construction as a whole. As mentioned above, de Groot associates the exclusive use of imperfective infinitives in the Hungarian absentive construction with the stative character of the whole construction. However, the restriction to imperfective infinitives in Hungarian seems to be language-specific. The construction itself is compatible with both perfective and imperfective conceptualisation of the purpose activity. While, as said above, aspect is relatively weakly grammaticalised in Baltic, and many verbs are bi-aspectual, we can point to a large number of prefixed verbs incompatible with a progressive reading:

- (14) Lithuanian
- | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---------------|----------------|--|
| * <i>Tėtis</i> | <i>šiuo</i> | <i>metu</i> | <i>nuskina</i> | |
| dad.NOM.SG | this.INS.SG.M | moment.INS.SG | TEL.pick.PRS.3 | |
| | <i>obuolį.</i> | | | |
| | apple.ACC.SG | | | |
| | Intended meaning ‘Dad is picking an apple right now.’ | | | |

⁴ The differences in boundedness between the objects in these sentences as well as aspectual distinctions would normally induce differences in object marking, but these cannot manifest themselves here because the verb of motion imposes the genitive, a point to which we will return in section 6 below.

- (15) **Vaikai šiuo metu pa-čiuožinėja*
 child.NOM.PL this.INS.SG.M moment.INS.SG DELIM-skate.PRS.3
 Intended meaning ‘The children are doing some skating right now.’

In addition to the Lithuanian facts discussed here, we will adduce an example from Polish, a Slavonic language where aspect is more grammaticalised and the aspectual value of a verb is virtually never unclear.

- (16) Polish (NCP)
Była płacić rachunek w kcyńskiej
 be.PST.F.SG[3] pay[IPFV].INF bill.ACC.SG in PLN.ADJ.LOC.SG.F
energetyce.
 power.company.LOC.SG
 ‘She had been to settle a bill at the Kcynia power company.’

- (17) Polish (NCP)
 [*Wracał ze składu budowlanego.*]
gdzie był zapłacić fakturę.
 where be.PST.M.SG[3] pay[PFV].INF invoice.ACC.SG
 ‘[He was on his way back from the building materials store,]
 where he had been to settle an invoice.’

2.4. Outward-point focus

In the situations hitherto illustrated, complex events consisting of outward motion, purpose and return motion were involved. The typical context is a situation in which the speaker relates the events of the day or part of the day:

- (18) Lithuanian
 [*Šiandien nieko ypatingo nenuveikiau.*]
tiesiog atsikėliau ir tada buvau
 simply get.up.PST.1SG and then be.PST.1SG
apsipirkti, išlėkiau dar trumpam į lauką,
 do.shopping.INF pop.PST.1SG again briefly outdoors
buvau pasportuoti ir štai aš čia.
 be.PST.1.SG DELIM.sport.INF and PTC 1SG.NOM here
 ‘Today I didn’t do anything remarkable. I just got up, went out shopping,
 then I popped outdoors again for some jogging, and here I am.’⁵

This example is also interesting in that, unlike what we observe in (6), there is no reference to a person stating the absence of the speaker-mover

⁵ <https://ask.fm/MiceInga>, accessed February 21, 2019.

from her/his default location. The ‘absentive’ character of the construction in (18) is therefore not obvious.

(18) presents what we could call a holistic view of the motion event or (if we want to stick to an absentive interpretation), the absence event. But there are also situations where we have a (typically two-way) motion from the default location, but the narrative then focuses on what happened at the outward point of the two-way motion. This situation is often reflected in temporal clauses introduced by *kai* ‘when’:

(19) Lithuanian

<i>Kai</i>	<i>buvau</i>	<i>grybauti</i> ,	<i>mačiau</i>
when	be.PST.1SG	pick.mushrooms.INF	see.PST.1SG
<i>krūvas</i>	<i>išverstų</i>	<i>šiukšlių</i> .	
heap.ACC.PL	dump.PPP.GEN.PL	rubbish[PL].GEN	

‘When I was out picking mushrooms, I saw heaps of dumped rubbish.’⁶

(20) Lithuanian

<i>Šiandien, kai</i>	<i>buvau</i>	<i>balsuoti</i> ,
today when	be.PST.1SG	vote.INF
<i>pensininkų</i>	<i>buvo</i> .	
pensioner.GEN.PL	be.PST.3	

‘Today when I went to vote there were [a lot of] pensioners [sc. at the polling station].’⁷

These uses differ from that in (18) in that the two-way motion is not viewed in retrospect but the situation at the outward point of the motion, where the purpose event is realised, is focused upon. This is, in a way, reminiscent of the absentive situation, but with one conspicuous difference: the subject is away from her or his default location (the deictic centre), but the outward point of the motion becomes the observation point from which the event is viewed, and the subject is present at this observation point. A contextual absentive reading may develop if there is an observer different from the subject who states the subject’s absence at her or his default location, as in one of the possible interpretations of (21):

⁶ <http://drg.lt/straipsniai/skaitytojo-nuomon/7626-ar-pastebite-toki-viet-kuriose-nejleistinai-yra-imestos-iukls>, accessed February 21, 2019.

⁷ www.efoto.lt/naujienos/tik_tu_gali_save_nutildyti, accessed May 3, 2018.

(21) Lithuanian

Buvau pa-bėgioti ką tik grįžau.
be.PST.1SG DELIM-jog.INF just return.PST.1SG
 ‘I was off jogging, I just came back.’⁸

If this is the answer to a question ‘I just called you on the phone, where were you?’, then it would correspond to de Groot’s notion of an absentive. This means that apart from the notion of default location we also need that of **external observer**. It is crucial for the meaning of an absentive as it is defined by de Groot (as it is crucial for the use of the subject genitive of negation with ‘be’ in Russian according to Padučeva 2006), but it does not seem to be relevant for the Lithuanian construction *buvo* + *INF*. The two notions introduced here — default location and external observer — capture together what is rather inadequately captured by de Groot’s notion of deictic centre. In (7) and (8), a third-person subject moves from their default location (the neighbour’s home, the social worker’s institution) to the place where the speaker is. What de Groot calls the deictic centre could be the location of the speaker who observes the presence or absence of a person, or it could be, in the situation described by (7), the neighbour’s dwelling place if the situation had been described by one of her family members. As the subject’s default location and the observer’s location do not always coincide, we need two reference locations instead of one.

The return to the subject’s default location (de Groot’s deictic centre), which de Groot takes to be a presupposition in the case of the absentive, actually seems to be an implicature, which can be cancelled. (22) is accepted by native speakers of Lithuanian:⁹

(22) Lithuanian (constructed)

Ona buvo apsikirpti, bet po to
 PN.NOM be.PST.3 get.a.hairdo.INF but after that.GEN
negrįžo namo,
 NEG.return.PST.3 home
 [*ir jos vyras jaudinosi, kas atsitiko*].
 ‘Ann went to get a hairdo, but didn’t come back home afterwards
 [and her husband was worried what could have happened].’

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/asmyliumadaaaa/posts/318155291592994>, accessed May 3, 2018.

⁹ For German this cancellability is pointed out by Fortmann & Wöllstein (2013, 79).

Taking all these facts into account, we can describe the Lithuanian construction *buvo* + INF as a motion-cum-purpose construction referring to the past and typically presenting this motion as a two-way event including the subject's return to their default location, or at least the subject's subsequent departure from the outward point of motion. This return is, however, an implicature that can be cancelled. Besides, it is possible to focus on what happens at the outward point of the motion, so that the return, though implied, is backgrounded. When the outward point of the motion is focused upon, this may be in order to emphasise the subject's absence from the default location as noted by an external observer, but this is not an essential aspect of the use of the construction. More essential is the element of motion, more specifically ambidirectional motion, out of and back to a default location. The use of the construction may be stretched to comprise situations where the return to the default location is intended but not realised due to circumstances, or passes through intermediate locations. We therefore propose the more general notion of **ambidirectionals**, which includes ambidirectionals with absentive focus. An ambidirectional always implies a certain period of absence from the default location, but de Groot's notion of absentive overemphasises this element. An ambidirectional allows different types of focus, and within one type of focusing a specific configuration of participants—speaker, subject-mover and observer—yields an absentive interpretation.

3. Latvian *bija* + INF

Latvian has a fairly exact counterpart to the Lithuanian construction *buvo* + INF, differing from the Lithuanian one in one respect only: the Latvian construction can contain either a directional phrase or a static locative phrase specifying the location of the activity denoted by the infinitive:

- (23) Latvian
Bijām peldēties ezerā, ūdens jau
 be.PST.1PL swim.INF lake.LOC.SG water.NOM.SG already
padzisis, bet vēl lietojams.
 cool.PPA.NOM.SG.M but still usable.NOM.SG.M
 'We've been for a swim in the lake, the water has already cooled
 but is still enjoyable.'¹⁰

¹⁰ https://www.meteolapa.lv/komentari/no/652/aglims?Comment_page=106, accessed May 3, 2018.

- (24) *Bijām nopeldēties uz Beberbeķu ūdenstilpni.*
 be.PST.1PL swim.INF to PLN[PL].GEN reservoir.ACC.SG
 [Sen tur nebija būs.]
 ‘We went for a swim to the Beberbeķi lake reservoir.
 [We hadn’t been there for a long time.]’¹¹

In Lithuanian only a static local phrase is possible:

- (25) Lithuanian
Buvau mieste apsipirkti
 be.PST.1SG town.LOC.SG do.shopping.INF
 [ir negalėjau praeit pro šalį nenupirkus dukrytei pirmos suknytės.]
 ‘I was in town for shopping [and could not refrain from buying
 my little daughter her first dress.]’¹²
- (26) **Buvau į miestą apsipirkti.*
 be.PST.1SG to town.ACC.SG do.shopping.INF

The occurrence of the directional phrase in a sentence that otherwise contains no overt verb of motion is remarkable, and we will comment on it further on.

Like their Lithuanian counterparts, Latvian constructions with *bija* + INF may be characterised by outward-point focus. This focus is clear from the follow-up sentence in (27) and even more so from the use of the construction in a temporal clause that takes the situation at the outward point of motion as a reference frame for the temporal anchoring of another event in (28):

- (27) Latvian
Nesen bijām pastaigāties uz parku un mazais nolēma, ka jāvelk nost zandales.
 recently be.PST.1PL walk.INF to park.ACC.SG and
 little.NOM.SG.M decide.PST.3 that DEB.pull off sandal.NOM.PL
 ‘Recently we went for a walk to the park and my little boy decided he had to take off his sandals.’¹³
- (28) *Tavs tētis pazaudēja savu*
 your.NOM.SG.M dad.NOM.SG lose.PST.3 RPOSS.ACC.SG

¹¹ <http://www.civciv.lv/new/>, accessed July 26, 2009.

¹² <https://mamyciuklubas.lt/forums/2014-ju-balandinukai-ir-geguzinukai-27122/?page=31>

¹³ <http://www.maminuklubs.lv/mazulis/20120827-mazas-pedinas-kuras-skrien-preti-vasarai-/>

telefonu, kad bijām pastaigāties, bet
 telephone.ACC.SG when be.PST.1PL walk.INF but
mans izlādējās.
 1POSS.NOM.SG.M get.uncharged.PST.3
 ‘Your dad lost his phone when we went for a walk, and mine’s
 battery got low.’¹⁴

4. Present-tense extensions of the Lithuanian construction *buvo* + INF

Vogel (2007) distinguishes between languages with a ‘full absentive’ and those with a ‘partial absentive’ restricted to the past. In actual fact, this distinction is not as rigid as this classification would suggest. Czech is listed among languages with a ‘full’ absentive, but according to Dokulil (1949), the present-tense constructions have a somewhat occasional character and often occur with a pause before the infinitive, which is added as a kind of afterthought. The same applies to Lithuanian, where, e.g., (29) is a perfectly normal utterance if a pause is inserted before the infinitive:

(29) *Ona yra mieste — apsipirkti.*
 PN.NOM be.PRS.3 town.LOC.SG do.shopping.INF
 ‘Ann is in town, doing her shopping.’

Instances where the infinitive is not clearly an afterthought, separated from the verb ‘be’ and the rest of the sentential construction by a pause, are not always readily accepted by native speakers. We have succeeded in finding one clear example on the internet (though a more extensive search would probably yield more instances):

(30) Lithuanian
[Esu sąžini[n]ga ir atsakinga!]
Čia esu pirkti, parduoti ir mainytis
 here be.PRS.1SG buy.INF sell.INF and swap.INF
[Drabužiai viena iš mano aistrų. Visi įkelti rūbai yra labai geros būklės, tiesiog mano nebedėvimi ar net nedevėti.]
 ‘[I am honest and responsible.] I’m here to buy, sell and swap.
 [Clothes are one of my passions. All clothes I have uploaded are in a good state, simply no longer worn by me or never worn at all.]’¹⁵

¹⁴ <https://www.wattpad.com/637142080-vien%C4%ABgais-22-noda%C4%BCa>

¹⁵ <https://www.vinted.lt/narys/115814-kristina0009>, accessed February 17, 2019.

If we take into account such occasional extensions, of which a native informant may not be immediately aware when asked about their existence without a natural context for their use, it is quite possible that for many other languages the answer is not clear-cut either. Vogel lists Serbian as a language with a full absentive but Croatian and Bosnian as having only the past-tense variety, which raises suspicion as these three languages are still close enough to be treated as regional varieties of the same language. Perhaps, then, the divergent answers are just divergent assessments by different informants of the occasional extensions of the 'be' + INF construction into the domain of the present.

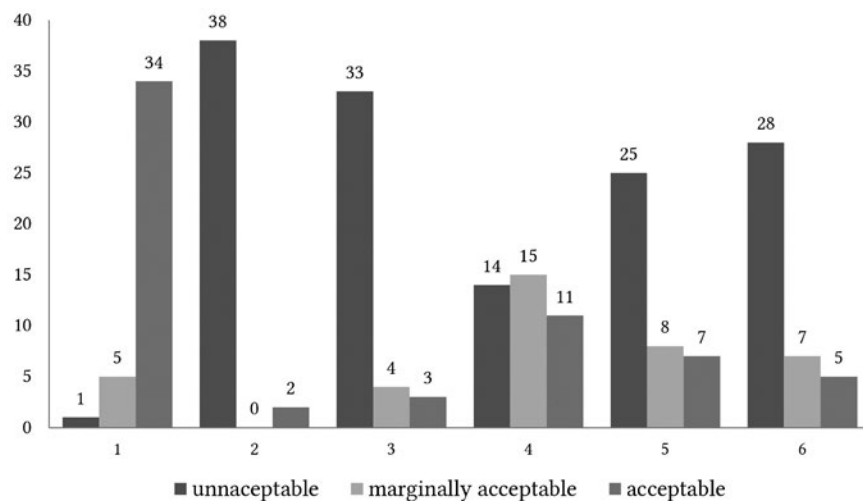
As Lithuanian is among the languages with a not fully established (perhaps emergent) present-tense absentive, we decided to have a closer look at such extensions and to compare our results with what we know about the more firmly established present-tense absentive of German.

In order to gain a more accurate picture of the status of constructions as illustrated in (30) in present-day Lithuanian, we compiled a questionnaire in which the informants were asked to evaluate a number of sentences with present-tense forms of 'be' and an infinitive, as in (30). The questionnaire is reproduced, with an English translation, as an appendix to this article. The questionnaire contained one instance (sentence 1) with a past-tense form of 'be', and one instance of what would be a typical absentive situation (an external observer stating the absence of the subject from the subject-mover's default location), with a 3rd-person present-tense form of 'be' (sentence 2). Two sentences (3 and 5) have 1st-person present-tense forms of 'be'; they are not absentive but denote the subject's location at the outward point of a motion event starting out from the default location. One sentence (4) is similar but has a comma, indicating a pause, between the verb 'be' and the infinitive. A final sentence (6) is similar to sentences 3 and 5 but has a 3rd-person form of 'be'; like 3 and 5, it shows outward-point focus and (unlike 2) it does not reflect the situation of an external observer stating the subject's absence from the default location. The informants had to evaluate the sentences as 1=unacceptable, 2=marginally acceptable, or 3=acceptable. The assessments are shown in the chart below.

Assessments were clear-cut in the case of (1) and (2): while (1) was widely accepted, (2) was clearly rejected. For the remaining sentences judgements were less pronounced. Most informants (28 out of 40, or 70%) marked as marginally acceptable or acceptable at least one of the four

sentences, while 12 informants (30%) rejected them all. Sentence 4, which has a comma between ‘be’ and the infinitive, stands out as the one garnering most positive judgements, which is reminiscent of the situation in Czech as characterised by Dokulil. For (3), (5) and (6) negative judgements predominated, but a non-negligible number of informants evaluated the sentences as at least marginally acceptable.

Chart 1. Results from the questionnaire on ‘be’_{PRS} + infinitive in Lithuanian



Row 1 of the table below shows the spread of informants across age groups, while row 2 shows the number of informants rejecting all sentences with present-tense forms of ‘be’ per age group:

Table 1. Spread of the informants across age groups (row 1) and number of informants rejecting all constructions with present-tense forms of ‘be’ per age group

between 15 and 25	between 26 and 35	between 36 and 45	between 46 and 55	over 56	total
9	7	5	12	7	40
4	3	1	2	2	40

While the numbers are, of course, too small to be of any statistical significance, we see that all age groups included informants who rejected all sentences with a present-tense form of ‘be’.

When we compare these results with what we know about German, it is striking that the properly absentive use as illustrated in questionnaire sentence (2) had the highest rate of rejection. The usage type that had a slightly higher rate of acceptance is the outward-point focus type in its present-tense variety. It refers to a situation in which the subject-mover is still at the outward point of motion, the implicature of return being replaced with the implicature of imminent return. This means that the absentive interpretation of present-tense extensions of ‘be’ + INF in Lithuanian is at least strongly dispreferred, whereas they are claimed to be characteristic for German as illustrated by sentences like (1).

This very incomplete exploration based on just one language does not warrant conclusions of any kind but does seem to warrant a warning, viz., that among languages listed as having a full absentive the status of the present-tense absentive need not be the same everywhere, and that one language’s present-tense absentive need not be fully comparable to another language’s absentive even with respect to what could perhaps be viewed as the most prototypically absentive situation.

5. Past-tense and full absentives

In the preceding section we gave an overview of the different ways in which a ‘past-tense absentive’ may be used. We also looked into the occasional extensions of a past-tense absentive into the domain of the present. We will now compare what the Lithuanian data tell us with the data of a language well known as possessing a ‘full absentive’, viz. German.

First, there is the direction of motion. In Lithuanian, as we saw, we have situations in which a third-person subject moves from her or his default location to the observer’s location, as in (7) and (8). These are possible in the case of the German absentive as well, at least in the past:

(31) German

<i>Die</i>	<i>Nachbarin</i>	<i>war</i>	<i>eben</i>
DEF.NOM.SG.F	neighbour[F].NOM	be.PST.3SG	just
<i>den</i>	<i>Schlüssel</i>	<i>abholen.</i>	
DEF.ACC.SG.M	key.ACC.SG	fetch.INF	

‘The neighbour was here a moment ago to fetch the key.’

Secondly, we have situations of what was characterised above as ‘outward-point focus’. The subject, who also functions as the observer (there is no external observer different from the subject and stating the subject’s absence from a certain location), describes what happened at the outward point of a two-way motion event starting out from the default location:

(32) German (OWID)

<i>Die</i>	<i>33jährige</i>	<i>war</i>	<i>einkaufen,</i>
DEF.NOM.SG.F	33.years old[F]	be.PST.3SG	do.shopping.INF
<i>als ihr</i>	<i>Handy</i>		<i>klingelte.</i>
when 3POSS[F].NOM.SG.N	mobile.phone.NOM.SG		ring.PST.3SG

‘The 33 year old woman was doing her shopping when her mobile phone rang.’

The telephone presumably rings, for instance, in her handbag, so there can be no absentive interpretation. There is no external observer stating the subject’s absence from her default location for the purpose of shopping. There is thus nothing specifically absentive about the whole construction.

Of course, there are also uses of German past-tense ‘be’ + INF that are strictly absentive in the sense of de Groot. They refer to situations where the absence of a person from her or his default location is stated by an external observer, where a person is said to have been absent from the scene of the narrative:

(33) German (OWID)

<i>Das</i>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>hatte</i>	<i>zusammen</i>
DEF.NOM.SG.N	child.NOM.SG	have.PST.3	together
<i>mit einem</i>	<i>drei</i>	<i>Jahre</i>	<i>älteren</i>
with INDEF.DAT.SG.M	three	year.ACC.PL	older.DAT.SG.M
<i>Buben</i>	<i>in der</i>	<i>elterlichen</i>	<i>Wohnung [...]</i>
boy.DAT.SG	in DEF.DAT.SG.F	parental.DAT.SG.F	home
<i>gespielt,</i>	<i>während die</i>	<i>Mutter</i>	
play.PP	while DEF.NOM.SG.F	mother.NOM.SG	

einkaufen *war.*
do.shopping.INF be.PST.3

‘The child had been playing together with a three years older boy in the parental home while her mother was out shopping.’

In present-tense uses we do not find a difference of principle as compared to past-tense uses, though there are different preferences as to their interpretation. The use of present-tense forms of ‘be’ + INF is often absen-

tive in German, a use that, as we have seen above, was not accepted by our Lithuanian informants:

- (34) German (OWID)
Einbrecher kommen, wenn Kleingärtner
 burglar.NOM.PL come.PRS.3PL when garden.plot.holder.NOM.PL
einkaufen sind.
 do.shopping.INF be.PRS.3PL
 ‘Burglars come when garden plot owners are out for shopping.’

But other uses are of the type that gained more acceptance from our Lithuanian informants, viz. the subject-observer is at the outward point of a two-way motion event:

- (35) German
Ich bin gerade einkaufen und habe
 I be.PRS.1SG just shop.INF and have.PRS.1SG
eine wundervolle Lederjacke entdeckt.
 INDEF.ACC.SG.F wonderful.ACC.SG.F leather.jacket discover.PP
 ‘I am just shopping and have discovered a wonderful leather jacket.’¹⁶

These comparative data are fragmentary, but they would suggest that in German the absentive uses of ‘be’ + INF are firmly established, especially in the present tense. However, several types of uses of our construction both in the past tense and in the present tense fail to show the definitional features for an absentive as formulated by de Groot. There is thus no evidence warranting the conclusion that a radical change, with the rise of a specifically absentive construction, has occurred in German. More research is needed, however, as the intuitions of German native speakers about the interpretation of sentences like (31)–(35) tend to diverge, with regional differences probably playing a certain role.

6. Motion events in the past

Above we noted that if in certain languages an absentive occurs only in the past while in other languages it occurs both in the past and in the present, we should at least consider the hypothesis that the past-tense variety might be the original one in all cases, and that the construction perhaps did not

¹⁶ <https://funzentrale.com/180207>, accessed October 23, 2019.

originate as an absentive. We shall now have a closer look at the structural properties of past-tense absentives in Lithuanian and other languages to help us determine what it is.

An interesting property of the Lithuanian past-tense absentive is that when the infinitive has an object to which it would normally assign accusative, this object will be in the genitive:

- (36) Lithuanian (CCLL)
- | | | | | |
|------------|------------------|--------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Tai</i> | <i>gal</i> | <i>buvai</i> | tėvo | <i>aplankyti?</i> |
| then | perhaps | be.PST.2SG | father.GEN.SG | visit.INF |
| — | <i>paklausė.</i> | | | |
| | ask.PST.3 | | | |
- ‘Then perhaps you’ve been to visit your father? — he asked.’

This case assignment is characteristic of infinitives with verbs of motion.¹⁷ Compare (37), where the infinitive is dependent on a verb of motion, with (38), where the complement-taking verb is a non-motion verb:

- (37) Lithuanian
- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| <i>Rimvydas</i> | <i>Bironas,</i> | <i>gyvenantis</i> | <i>Panevėžyje,</i> | | |
| PN.NOM | PN.NOM | live.PPRA.NOM.SG.M | PLN.LOC | | |
| <i>į</i> | <i>Rudilius</i> | <i>atvažiuoja</i> | <i>tik tėvų</i> | <i>aplankyti.</i> | |
| to | PLN[PL].ACC | come.PRS.3 | only | parent.GEN.PL | visit.INF |
- ‘Rimvydas Bironas, who lives in Panevėžys, comes to Rudiliai only to visit his parents.’¹⁸
- (38) *Be* *abejo,* *reikia* *tėvus*
 without doubt.GEN.SG be.needed.PRS.3 parent.ACC.PL
aplankyti, *jiems* *padėti [...]*
 visit.INF 3.DAT.PL.M help.INF
- ‘To be sure, one should visit one’s parents, help them...’¹⁹

This genitival construction in (36) is remarkable as it contains no verb of motion. A semantic element of motion is therefore implicit in the con-

¹⁷ The historical explanation for this genitival marking is that with motion verbs the infinitive of purpose replaced an original supine, a verb form specifically encoding purpose of motion (cf. Latin *veni rogatum* ‘I came to ask’). In both Slavonic and Baltic, the object of a supine was originally in the genitive, and in Lithuanian this marking has been inherited by the infinitive with verbs of motion.

¹⁸ <http://kmintys.lt/archyvas/?psl=1psl&id=616>

¹⁹ <http://www.medicinavisiems.lt/straipsniai/numatyta/jei-sukurete-savo-seima>

struction as a whole. Something similar can be observed in many languages, where the verb ‘be’ is combined with a directional prepositional phrase to refer to a motion event. Compare (39) from English, (40) from Dutch and (41) from Latvian:

(39) *We’ve been to France for the holiday.*

(40) Dutch

We zijn naar Frankrijk geweest met vakantie.
 we be.PRS.1PL to France be.PP with holiday

(41) Latvian

Vakar ar bērniem bijām uz izrādi.
 yesterday with child.DAT.PL be.PST.1PL to performance.ACC.SG
Iesaku visiem, ļoti jauka
 recommend.PRS.1SG all.DAT.PL.M very nice.NOM.SG.F
izrāde.
 performance.NOM.SG
 ‘Yesterday I went to a performance with the children. I can recom-
 mend it to anybody, it’s a very nice performance.’²⁰

Latvian uses the directional marking also in past-tense absentive constructions with the infinitive, as noted above and illustrated by example (24). But we will concentrate for a while on the constructions without infinitive, as it seems logical to assume that (24) is basically the same construction as in (41), expanded with an infinitive of purpose.

While modern English and Latvian do not use the construction illustrated in (39) and (41) with a present-tense form, Middle English did, and modern Dutch still does:

(42) English (15th c.)

Also, I purposyd me to haue sent to Stapylton as ye sent me word be James Gresham, and it is told me that he is to London.
 ‘... and I am told he has gone to London.’²¹

(43) Dutch

Hij is naar Amerika.
 he is to America
 ‘He’s gone to America.’

²⁰ <http://liepajasteatris.lv/bezgaligo-stastu-stasts/>

²¹ <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/Paston?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

The constructions in (42) and (43) have an absentive interpretation in de Groot's sense. But this can hardly be said about (39) and (40). In Dutch, the absentive reading would be natural if the past tense were used:

- (44) Dutch
Hij was naar Amerika.
 he was to America
 'He had gone to America.'

But (39) and (40) are not eligible for an absentive reading because they contain a perfect. Though the use of the Dutch perfect differs from that of its English counterpart (it allows much more precise location in time than the English perfect), both share the feature of current relevance characteristic of perfects in general. This means that the event is viewed from the point of view of speech time, which precludes zooming in on event time in order to state the absence of the subject from some location at a moment within the time interval thus defined.²² The natural interpretation for (39) and (40) is that of a two-way motion event, i.e. a complex motion event consisting of three single events: outward motion to a certain location, a stay of indeterminate length at the outward location and a second motion event away from the outward location. The construction is usually understood in such a way that the second motion event brings the subject back to her or his initial location, but this may be a mere implicature. What seems to be linguistically encoded is that the subject is no longer at the outward location. This should normally make present-tense uses of the construction impossible.

All this is important because the Lithuanian past-tense construction described in section 2 is basically of the same kind but for the presence of an infinitive, which is presumably a secondary expansion of a simpler motion construction which we cannot exactly reconstruct. The Latvian construction in (24) can be derived in a straightforward way from a simpler construction as in (41). The rise of the Lithuanian construction is less easy to reconstruct because the construction illustrated in (21) and other examples cannot contain a directional phrase as in Latvian. There is also no exact counterpart to the more basic Latvian construction as in (41). Instead, a construction with a static locative phrase would have to be used:

²² In contrast, all Lithuanian and Latvian instances of 'be' + INF discussed above have the verb 'be' in the preterite rather than the perfect. This is because though the Baltic languages have a perfect as well, its resultative use is much less pronounced than in English. The use of the perfect of 'be' in (2) would make the sentence experiential ('I have been there picking mushrooms at some time in my life.').

(45) Lithuanian (constructed)

Vakar su vaikais buvome spektaklyje.
 yesterday with children.INS.PL be.PST.1PL performance.LOC.SG
 ‘Yesterday I was at a performance with the children.’

However, the genitival marking on the object of the infinitive as illustrated in (36) is difficult to explain if we regard the construction as an expanded variety of a construction as in (45). In all constructions discussed here there is an element of motion reflected in morphosyntactic marking or simply latent but implied.

In the next section we will point to the existence, in several languages, of other constructions expressing two-way motion in the past, comparable to the constructions with ‘be’ and their expanded varieties with infinitives discussed until now. These are not always dedicated constructions as specific uses of constructions or grammatical forms with a broader array of functions may be involved.

6.1. Ambidirectional pluperfects

Both Baltic languages use the pluperfects of motion verbs in a construction very similar to that with ‘be’ + INF. This has already been mentioned in the literature on the absentive, cf. Žeimantienė (2018, 402):

(46) Lithuanian

Vasarą buvome nuvažiaję į vieną
 summer.ACC be.PST.1PL go.PPA.NOM.PL.M to one.ACC.SG
draugišką turnyrą Lenkijoje.
 friendly.ACC.SG tournament.ACC.SG Poland.LOC
 ‘This summer we went to a friendly tournament in Poland.’²³

(47) *Vakar buvom nuėję pasižiūrėti*

yesterday be.PST.1PL go.PPA.NOM.PL.M see.INF
to filmo,
 DEM.GEN.SG.M film.GEN.SG
 [nepaklausę Pipinytės ir Arūno biteplius.lt “rekomendacijų”].
 ‘We went to see that film yesterday, [without listening to
 the recommendations of Pipinytė and Arūnas of biteplius.lt].’²⁴

²³ <https://www.lrytas.lt/sportas/futbolas/2019/01/01/news/benamiams-futbolas-ginklas-nuo-priklausomybiu-8732886/>

²⁴ <http://paulius.rymeikis.lt/lietuvisko-filmo-nereikalingi-zmones-premjera-jau-sausio-11-d/>

This use of the pluperfect is not motivated by the anteriority function of the pluperfect, as there is no reference time in the past with regard to which the event in (46) and (47) could be said to be anterior. Such functions of pluperfects are discussed by Dahl (1985, 144–145), who associates their use with a ‘past temporal frame’. Similar uses of the pluperfect are described by Plungian & Van der Auwera (2006) as an instantiation of what they call the ‘discontinuous past’, a category whose existence has been called into question, cf. Cable (2016) and von Prince (2018). We will not enter upon a discussion of this point here, as the Lithuanian ‘cancelled-result’ pluperfects are at best only a first step toward the rise of a fully-fledged discontinuous past, and they are restricted to a certain groups of verbs in which motion verbs figure prominently (alongside other naturally two-way event verbs like ‘borrow’ and ‘lend’).

Like the Lithuanian construction discussed in section 2, ambidirectional pluperfects have no preferences as to whether the motion should be away from the deictic centre or towards it:

(48) Lithuanian

[*Dabar kaip tik kalbėjom, prisiminėm.*]

<i>kai</i>	<i>B. Jelcinas</i>	<i>buvo</i>	<i>čia</i>	<i>atvažiuojo,</i>	<i>tai</i>
when	PN.NOM	be.PST.3	here	come.PPA.NOM.SG	PTC
<i>buvo</i>	<i>patys</i>		<i>geriausi</i>	<i>santykiai.</i>	
be.PST.3	very.NOM.PL.M		best.NOM.PL.M	relation.NOM.PL	

‘[We were just talking and remembered how], when Boris Yeltsin was here for a visit, relations were excellent.’²⁵

The ambidirectional pluperfect may have an infinitive of purpose instead of a directional phrase, which makes it more similar to the ambidirectional construction *buvo* + INF:

(49) Lithuanian

<i>Savivaldybės</i>	<i>specialistai</i>	<i>jau</i>	<i>buvo</i>
municipality.GEN.SG	specialist.NOM.PL	already	be.PST.3
<i>nuvažiuojo</i>	<i>apžiūrėti</i>	<i>ir</i>	<i>įvertinti</i>
go.PPA.NOM.PL.M	inspect.INF	and	assess.INF
<i>pastato</i>	<i>būklės.</i>		
building.GEN.SG	state.GEN.SG		

²⁵ <http://www.diena.lt/naujienos/lietuva/salies-pulsas/reveransas-lietuvos-ordinui-544811>

‘Specialists from the municipality have already been to inspect the building and assess its state.’²⁶

Like the construction *buvo* + INF, the ambidirectional pluperfect allows outward-point focus.

(50) Lithuanian

<i>Pamenu,</i>	<i>kai</i>	<i>buvome</i>	<i>nuvažiavę</i>	<i>į</i>
remember.PRS.1SG	when	be.PST.1PL	go.PPA.NOM.PL.M	to
<i>apleistą</i>	<i>nuo</i>	<i>sovietų</i>	<i>besislapsčiusio</i>	
desert.PPP.ACC.SG	from	Soviet.GEN.PL	hide.PPA.GEN.SG.M	
<i>rezistento</i>		<i>Benedikto Mikulio</i>	<i>sodybą</i>	
resistance.fighter.GEN.SG		PN.GEN	farmstead.ACC.SG	
<i>Kaišiadorių</i>	<i>rajone</i>			
PLN[PL].GEN	district.LOC.SG			

[*radome jo daiktų, o tarp jų—ir Lietuvos vėliavą.*]

‘I remember when we visited the deserted Kaišiadorys farmstead of the resistance fighter Benediktas Mikulis, who hid from the Soviets, [we found some of his belongings, among them a Lithuanian flag.]’²⁷

One could be tempted to assume that in such situations the pluperfect is used in its canonical function of referring to an event anterior to another event in the past. However, in temporal clauses with *kai* this is not frequently done. Usually verbal aspect is sufficient to differentiate the phase in a sequence of events to which reference is made, and the simple past is used; cf. (51):

(51) Lithuanian

<i>Kai</i>	<i>nuvažiavome</i>	<i>į</i>	<i>prieglaudą,</i>	<i>buvo</i>
when	go.PST.1PL	to	shelter.ACC.SG	be.PST.3
<i>labai</i>	<i>sunku</i>	—		
very	difficult.N			

[*daug akučių, daug žvilgsnių, kurie tikisi, kad pasirinksi būtent ji.*]

‘When we arrived at the [animal] shelter, we had a very difficult time: [there were so many little eyes, so many looks hoping we would pick them out.]’²⁸

²⁶ <http://taurageszinios.lt/naujienos/aktualijos/2015/08/apelesti-pastatai-socialiniams-bustams>

²⁷ <http://www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/2017-03-10-latviu-scenografas-ugis-berzinis-manotemperamentas-artimesnis-lietuviskam/156609>

²⁸ <https://www.delfi.lt/pilietis/naujienos/priglaude-skaudzia-praeiti-turejusi-suniuka-jis-matekaip-sunys-sudraske-jo-mama.d?id=74370234>

Here the use of the perfective *nuvažiovome* rather than the imperfective *važiovome* is sufficient to make clear that the scene depicted in the main clause is situated at the end of the journey rather than on the way there. The function of *kai buvome nuvažioavę* in (50) is not to mark anteriority but to make it clear that what is referred to in the main clause is situated in time within a complex two-way motion event and, spatially, at its outward end. The whole subordinate clause does not mean ‘when we had visited Mikulis’ farmstead and returned home’. For such an interpretation to obtain, we would have to use the complex subordinator *po to, kai* ‘after’:

- (52) Lithuanian (Juozas Aputis, 2005, CCLL)
 [O kas tai sugalvojo? Žinoma, aš, neseniai, pernai,]
po to, kai buvau nuvažioavęs...
 after DEM.GEN.SG.N when be.PST.1SG drive.PPA.NOM.SG.M
tenai, kur tas kalnas ir kur
 there where DEM.NOM.SG.M hill.NOM.SG and where
tie pušynai.
 DEM.NOM.PL.M pine.grove.NOM.PL
 ‘[And who thought that up? I did, of course, not so long ago, last year.]
 after I had been there, where that hill and the pine groves were.’

The ambidirectional pluperfect characterised in this subsection is relevant to our discussion of *buvo* + INF in two ways. First, it is another instance of an ambidirectional past-tense construction, in this case not a dedicated construction but a type of use of a gram basically serving other functions, but still showing a striking functional parallelism that cannot be derived in a predictable way from the meaning of the pluperfect. It results presumably from the interaction of pluperfect semantics with the semantics of motion verbs. Secondly, it would be tempting to assume that the ambidirectional construction *buvo* + INF arose from an ambidirectional pluperfect expanded with an infinitive of purpose (the variety illustrated in (49)), through deletion of the participle. But this does not seem plausible, as languages without an ambidirectional pluperfect also have the construction ‘be’ + INF. The only piece of evidence that could lend a certain plausibility to the assumption of deletion of the participle is the genitival marking of the object, observed both in (49) and in (36), as this marking is characteristic of constructions with verbs of motion. But perhaps this case marking is simply licenced by the semantic element of motion implicit in the ambidirectional construction as in (36), and need not be accounted for by the former presence of a motion lexeme.

6.2. Ambidirectional uses of verbs of indeterminate motion

Several Slavonic languages have so-called verbs of indeterminate motion referring to non-translocational motion as in (53) but also to repeated translocational motion back and forward from a certain location (as 54). They are opposed to verbs of determinate motion denoting unidirectional (also repeated) motion with a specific goal as in (55):

- (53) Russian
Deti xodjat po parku.
 child.NOM.PL go[INDET].PRS.3PL about park.DAT.SG
 ‘The children walk about in the park.’
- (54) Russian
Deti xodjat v školu.
 child.NOM.PL go[INDET].PRS.3PL to school.ACC.SG
 ‘The children go to school.’
- (55) Russian
Deti idut v školu.
 child.NOM.PL go[DET].PRS.3PL to school.ACC.SG
 ‘The children are on their way to school.’

The Slavonic verbs of indeterminate motion are discussed in an article by Dickey (2010), who argues that the opposition between verbs of determinate and indeterminate motion was originally one between motion verbs and manner-of-motion verbs. South Slavonic is still much closer to this original state of affairs than North Slavonic (i.e., West and East Slavonic taken together), where the character of the distinction has changed and the manner-of-motion verbs have lost the ability to express motion along a single goal-oriented trajectory. There are also differences within North Slavonic. East Slavonic, unlike West Slavonic, can use the past-tense forms (and only these) of indeterminate motion verbs to encode one-time two-way motion along a single goal-oriented trajectory. In this case, motion must be away from a default location coinciding with the location of the observer.²⁹

²⁹ A two-way motion event with the speaker-observer’s location as its outward point can be expressed by prefixed imperfective verbs forms like *pri-xodit* ‘come’. These no longer belong to the class of verbs of indeterminate motion, although the latter serve as their derivational base. In past-tense constructions with such verbs a two-way motion event is suggested by the use of an imperfective rather than perfective verb, and we do not consider them typical instances of an ambidirectional construction.

(56) Russian

My včera xodili v kino.
 1PL.NOM yesterday go[INDET].PST.PL to cinema[ACC]
 'We went to the cinema yesterday.'

Combined with an infinitive of purpose, such constructions with indeterminate motion verbs convey the same information as past-tense constructions with 'be' and the infinitive of purpose in other languages:

(57) Russian (A. A. Allendorf, 1901, RNC)

[Den' prošel samym obyknovennym obrazom:]
xodili katar'sja na kon'kax,
 go[INDET].PST.PL ride.INF on ice.skate.LOC.PL
[eli za obedom moroženoe, večerom byli Karpovy, a potom A. N. Kejzer.]
 '[The day went by in a perfectly usual way:] we went ice-skating,
 [had ice cream at dinner, in the evening the Karpovs came, and later
 on A. N. Keyser.]'

Such verbs of indeterminate motion also have perfective counterparts with the prefix *s-*, specifying such an ambidirectional motion event as a one-time occurrence:

(58) Russian (Evgenij Griškovec, RNC)

[Vy vyšli iz doma s zontikom,]
prišli na rabotu, sxodili poobedat',
 come.PST.PL to work.ACC PFX.go[INDET].PST.PL have.lunch.INF
vernulis' na rabotu...
 return.PST.PL to work.ACC
 '[You departed from home with your umbrella,] arrived at work,
 went out for lunch, came back to work...'.

Like the above-mentioned ambidirectional constructions, the Russian one with verbs of indeterminate motion also allows outward-point focus:

(59) Russian (Vladimir Radčenko, 2003, RNC)

Kogda my ezdili v Germaniju
 when 1PL.NOM go[INDET].PST.PL to Germany.ACC
po obmenu opytom,
 for exchange.DAT.SG experience.INS.SG
[v sostave našej delegacii byl zamestitel' ministra justicii,]
on sud'e nemeckogo
 3.NOM.SG.M judge.DAT.SG German.GEN.SG.M
administrativnogo suda zadal
 administrative.GEN.SG.M court.GEN.SG pose.PST.M.SG

vopros: [...]

question.ACC.SG

‘When we were on an exchange visit in Germany, [the deputy minister of justice was in our delegation,] and he asked a judge of the German administrative court: [...]’

This example is instructive because verbs of indeterminate motion can never denote a displacement in one direction. As (59) refers to events taking place at the outward point of a one-way motion (the journey back being still, at that point, in the future), a perfective verb of determinate motion could as well be used, as illustrated in (60):

(60) Russian

<i>Kogda</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>poexali</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>Germaniju</i>
when	1PL.NOM	drive[DET.PFV].PST.PL	to	Germany.ACC
<i>na</i>	<i>godovščinu</i>	<i>našego</i>	<i>gorja</i>	[...]
for	anniversary.ACC.SG	our.GEN.SG.N	grief.GEN.SG	
<i>nemcy</i>	<i>nas</i>	<i>očen’</i>	<i>xorošo</i>	<i>vstretili.</i>
German.NOM.PL	1PL.ACC	very	well	meet.PST.PL

‘When we went to Germany for the anniversary of our grievous loss [...] the Germans met us very well.’³⁰

(59) differs from this in that the construction describes the whole of the journey to Germany and back, though focusing on the outward point of the journey, viz. the stay in Germany.

In its variety with outward-point focus, the Russian ambidirectional construction based on verbs of indeterminate motion can also acquire a contextually determined absentive reading, as in (61). This can be contrasted with (59), where the subject is one of a group of persons stated to have been at the outward point of the motion event.

(61) Russian (V. P. Beljaev, *Staraja krepost’*, 1937–1940, RNC)

<i>Poka</i>	<i>my</i>	<i>xodili</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>kinematograf,</i>
while	1PL.NOM	go[INDET].PST.PL	to	cinema.ACC.SG
<i>otec</i>		<i>po-snimal</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>sten</i>
father.NOM.SG		DISTR-remove.PST.SG.M	from	wall.GEN.PL

fotografii.
photograph.ACC.PL
‘While we were off to the cinema, father removed all the photographs from the walls.’

³⁰ <https://www.kompravda.eu/daily/23226/26975/>

The existence of an ambidirectional construction based on verbs of indeterminate motion in Russian (and in East Slavonic in general) accounts for an interesting fact, viz. the complete lack of an ambidirectional construction based on ‘be’ and the infinitive in these languages. The contrast may be seen when we compare Russian with Polish, also a Slavonic language. Polish also distinguishes verbs of determinate motion like *iść* ‘go (on foot)’ and *jechać* ‘go (by vehicle)’ from verbs of indeterminate motion like *chodzić* ‘walk about, go regularly’ and *jeździć* ‘drive about, go regularly (by vehicle)’, but the verbs of indeterminate motion are never used to refer to one single two-way motion event in the past. Correspondingly, Polish can have no ambidirectional motion-cum-purpose construction based on verbs of indeterminate motion, and a construction of the type ‘be’ + INF is used (already mentioned above with the aim of showing it may involve infinitives of both aspects). It is comparable in its uses to the Lithuanian construction discussed above, as shown by example (17) above, here repeated as (62), and (63), the former referring to the two-way motion event as a whole and the latter with outward-point focus:

(62) Polish (*Polityka*, 26.04.2008, NCP)

[*Wracał ze składu budowlanego,*
gdzie był zapłacić fakturę.
 where be.PST.M.SG[3] pay[PFV].INF invoice.ACC.SG
 ‘[He was on his way back from the building materials store,
 where he had been to settle an invoice.]’

(63) Polish (*Polityka*, 10.04.2004, NCP)

Kiedy proboszcz był poświęcić
 when priest.NOM.SG be.PST.M.SG[3] bless[PFV].INF
mieszkanie pani Grażyny,
 apartment.ACC.SG Mrs.GEN.SG PN.GEN
 [*pytał, czy ona albo ktoś w bloku nie bawił się przypadkiem w wywoły-*
wanie duchów.]
 ‘When the priest came to bless Mrs. Grażyna’s apartment,
 [he asked if by any chance she or anybody else in the block of flats
 engaged in conjuring spirits.]’

6.3. ‘Be and do’

The last example we will discuss here is from Swedish, and all the relevant data, together with the examples, were kindly provided by Östen Dahl. It is basically a construction of the type ‘be to’ (with directional phrase) as

illustrated in (39) and (40) above, but instead of an infinitive of purpose it has a coordinated finite verb:

(64) Swedish

<i>Vi</i>	<i>var</i>	<i>till</i>	<i>jobbet</i>	<i>igår</i>	<i>och</i>	<i>hämtade</i>
we	be.PST	to	job.DEF	yesterday	and	fetch.PST
<i>massor</i>		<i>med</i>	<i>kartonger.</i>			
mass.PL		with	cardboard.PL			

‘We went to our workplace yesterday and got a lot of cardboard boxes.’³¹

Through omission of the directional phrase we would get a pure ambidirectional motion-cum-purpose construction of the kind we have in Lithuanian or German; the construction is actually mentioned as an absentive in de Groot (2000, 696):

(65) Swedish (Östen Dahl, p. c.)

<i>Vi</i>	<i>var</i>	<i>och</i>	<i>hämtade</i>	<i>massor</i>	<i>med</i>
we	be.PST	and	fetch.PST	mass.PL	with
<i>kartonger</i>		<i>igår.</i>			
box.PL		yesterday			

‘We went and fetched a lot of cardboard boxes yesterday.’

As in Lithuanian (but perhaps in a more regular way), the construction can be used with present-tense reference:

(66) Swedish (Östen Dahl, p. c.)

<i>Jag</i>	<i>är</i>	<i>och</i>	<i>handlar.</i>
I	be.PRS	and	do.shopping.PRS

‘I’m just doing some shopping.’

This construction is not just progressive but refers to what is happening at the outward point of a two-way motion event.

6.4. Some general features of ambidirectionals

A common feature of the constructions discussed in this section, shared with the ‘be’ + INF construction dealt with in more detail, is that they refer to a motion event in the past as a closed whole. A one-way motion event radically changes a discourse referent’s situation, and a reference to a one-way outward motion event (outward with regard to the referent’s

³¹ <http://ironitech.blogspot.com/2008/08/>

default location) is therefore not the ideal introduction or transition to relating subsequent events relevant to the current situation of this discourse referent. It would, on the other hand, provide a suitable opening sentence for a narrative. It may therefore be convenient to have a way of referring to the motion event as closed and therefore having no immediate current relevance, and this is, perhaps, a reason why languages develop ways of encoding two-way motion events in the past. Even if the subject-mover does not return to her/his default location by the shortest route after discharge of the purpose of motion, the motion event may be characterised as closed in discourse terms. This does not mean the internal structure of the two-way motion event remains inaccessible: the speaker may first characterise a motion event as a closed whole and then use it as a setting for relating events that occurred at the outward point of motion or, more generally, during the motion event.

7. Ambidirectionals and absentives

Our investigation of the Lithuanian construction *buvo* + INF was guided by the consideration that, if some languages have only a past-tense absentive whereas others also have a present-tense absentive, this might be because the absentive construction tends to arise in the past tense and then spread to the present. The investigation has revealed that the putative past-tense absentives depart considerably from de Groot's characterisation of the absentive. The typical absentive situation in which the absence of a person from a certain (default) location is stated and brought in connection with an activity exercised elsewhere, stands alongside a series of uses that are not captured by the notion of absentive. In view of this we decided to introduce the notion of ambidirectional, referring to a construction (or type of use of grams basically serving other purposes) denoting a two-way motion event in the past, with a possibility of focusing on the outward point of this motion. When outward-point focus is combined with a situation in which the subject-mover's absence from her or his default location is stated by an external observer, an absentive reading obtains.

It is this outward-point focusing use that constitutes the point of departure for extension to the present tense. This extension may be occasional or it may become a regular feature of the language. But it may potentially be transposed to the present in both its varieties, the absentive and the non-absentive one. As we have seen above, the emergent Lithuanian

present-tense variety of the ‘be’ + INF construction gets, at the present stage, the non-absentive reading while its German counterpart can also have absentive readings (and perhaps even receive predominantly absentive readings). In the past tense, on the other hand, there seems to be no difference of principle between the German ‘absentive’ and the Lithuanian (Latvian, Polish...) ambidirectional. In spite of the differences in the present tense, we do not have sufficient grounds to set the two apart as different constructions. Though in German the construction ‘be’ + INF in its present-tense variety shows signs of developing into a real absentive, it is still but an outgrowth of a larger cluster whose nucleus is constituted by ambidirectional constructions.

What has been said here applies, of course, only to absentives that are in origin ambidirectionals, like ‘be’ + INF or the Scandinavian construction ‘be and do’. Some constructions claimed to be absentives are not of ambidirectional origin, like the Estonian construction, which uses the inessive of its *-ma-* infinitive to express absentive situations:

- (67) Estonian (Tamm 2011, 879)
- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|------------------|
| <i>Mari</i> | <i>on</i> | <i>uju-ma-s.</i> |
| PN | be.PRS.3 | swim-INF-INESS |
- ‘Mary is off swimming now.’

There is no directionality in this construction, and the specific properties attaching to ‘absentives’ of the type ‘be’ + INF or ‘be and do’ in virtue of their origin from a past-tense ambidirectional do not apply here. But in this case as well, it is not clear whether we are dealing with an absentive construction in its own right, as the construction is also, and perhaps primarily, progressive, as in (68), which qualifies only for a progressive reading:

- (68) Estonian (Tamm 2011, 878)
- | | | |
|-------------|-----------|-------------------|
| <i>Lumi</i> | <i>on</i> | <i>sula-ma-s.</i> |
| snow.NOM | be.PRS.3 | melt-INF-INESS |
- ‘The snow is melting.’

To what extent constructions like (67) can be considered absentives is therefore a matter for a separate discussion. In this article, we have discussed absentives in the broader context of ambidirectionals, which should, in our view, be recognised as a construction type in its own right, probably more so than absentives. As a cross-linguistically identifiable construction type, ‘be’ + INF and ‘be and do’ are basically restricted to past-time reference,

and their non-compositionality is revealed, first of all, by the occurrence of morphosyntactic features normally licenced by motion verbs but here occurring without motion verbs overtly appearing. The construction has a regular semantic profile with recurrent subtypes: the view taken of the motion event is either holistic or zooms in on its inner structure, with the outward point of the motion in focus. Under exactly which conditions ambidirectionals develop absentive interpretations, and to what extent we can speak of a linguistically encoded absentive meaning, is a matter for further research.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative, ADJ — adjective, ADV — adverb, DAT — dative, DEB — debitive, DEF — definite, DELIM — delimitative prefix, DEM — demonstrative, DET — determinate (motion), DISTR — distributive prefix, F — feminine, FUT — future, GEN — genitive, IMP — imperative, INDEF — indefinite, INDET — indeterminate (motion), INESS — inessive, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, IPFV — imperfective, IRR — irrealis, LOC — locative, M — masculine, N — neuter, NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, PFV — perfective, PFX — prefix, PL — plural, PLN — place name, PN — personal name, POSS — possessive, PP — past participle, PPA — past participle active, PPP — past participle passive, PPRA — present active participle, PRS — present, PST — past, PTC — particle, REL — relative pronoun, RFL — reflexive, RPOSS — reflexive possessive, SG — singular, TEL — telicising prefix

SOURCES

CCLL = Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language at <http://tekstynas.vdu.lt>
 NCP = National Corpus of Polish at <http://nkjp.pl>
 OWID = Online-Wortschatz-Informationssystem Deutsch at <http://www.owid.de>
 RNC = Russian National Corpus at <http://www.ruscorpora.ru>

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire sentences (with glosses added)

(1) (e.g., from a telephone conversation)

- *Kur buvai? Neradau tavęs namuose.*
 where be.PST.2SG NEG.find.1SG 2SG.GEN home.LOC.PL
- *Buvau pa-bėgioti. Jau grįžau.*
 be.PST.1SG DELIM-run.INF already return.PST.1SG
- ‘Where have you been? I didn’t find you at home.’ ‘I’ve been jogging. I’m back already.’

(2)

- *Kur Jonas? Neradau jo.*
 where John.NOM.SG NEG.find.PST.1SG 3.GEN.SG.M
- *Jis yra valgyti. Tuoju grįš.*
 3.NOM.SG.M be.PRS.3 eat.INF presently return.FUT.3
- ‘Where’s John? I didn’t find him.’ ‘He’s gone to have lunch. He’ll be back in a moment.’

(3) (e.g., from a telephone conversation)

- *Labas, kaip gyveni? Gal einam į kiną?*
 hello how live.PRS.2SG maybe go.PRS.1PL to cinema.ACC.SG
- *Gerai, kaip tik dabar esu pirkti bilietai.*
 OK just now be.PRS.1SG buy.INF ticket.GEN.PL
- ‘Hello, how are you? Shall we go to the cinema?’ ‘OK, I’m buying tickets right now.’

(4) (e.g., from a telephone conversation)

- *Gal susitinkam šiandien?*
 maybe meet.PRS.1PL today
- *Gerai. Aš dabar kaip tik esu mieste, balsuoti.*
 OK 1SG.NOM now just be.PRS.1SG town.LOC.SG vote.INF
Atvažiuok ir tu į centrą.
 come.IMP.2SG also 2SG.NOM to centre.ACC.SG
 ‘Shall we meet today?’ ‘OK, I’m in town right now for the election. Come to the town centre as well.’

(5) (e.g., from a telephone conversation)

- *Gal nupirksi ledų?*
 maybe buy.FUT.2SG ice.cream[PL].GEN
- *Gerai, kaip tik dabar esu apsipirkti.*
 OK just now be.PRS.1SG do.shopping.INF
 ‘Could you buy ice cream?’ ‘OK, I’m just out shopping.’

(6)

- *Norėčiau su ja susipažinti.*
 want.IRR.1SG with 3.INS.SG.F get.acquainted.INF
- *Tai gerai, galime nueiti pas juos.*
 that fine.ADV be.able.PRS.1PL go.INF to 3.ACC.PL.M
Ji dabar kaip tik yra aplankyti mamos.
 3.NOM.SG.F now just be.PRS.3 visit.INF mum.GEN.SG
 ‘I would like to meet her.’ ‘That’s fine, we can go there now. She’s just visiting her mother.’

Axel Holvoet

Vaiva Žeimantienė

Vilnius University

Institute for the Languages and Cultures of the Baltic

Universiteto 5, LT-01131 Vilnius

axel.holvoet@flf.vu.lt

vaiva.zeimantiene@flf.vu.lt