

AXEL HOLVOET & NICOLE NAU, eds., *Voice and Argument Structure in Baltic*. (Valency, Argument Realization and Grammatical Relations in Baltic, 2.) Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2015. viii + 402 pp.

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The present book deals with different aspects of voice in Baltic languages. The book presents the second volume in the (mini-)series “Valency, Argument Realization and Grammatical Relations in Baltic”. To be completely honest, I was a bit surprised to see Benjamins devote a whole series to a rather specific topic (why does not a similar series exist, for example, for Uralic languages, which have probably been more thoroughly discussed in linguistics?), but I must also admit that after having read the present book very carefully, I now understand much better why this is the case. Baltic languages are among those Indo-European languages that have not received too much attention in studies outside of Baltic linguistics, and having a whole series on them available from a distinguished publisher definitely helps to make them better known among typologists. Most papers in the volume are typologically oriented and written mostly in a typological-functional framework, which makes the papers accessible to anyone interested in argument-marking phenomena and data from languages that have not been focused upon extensively in preceding studies. Moreover, the adopted framework is novel in Baltic linguistics, where the focus has been largely on diachrony, and where the typological approach is still rather an exception than the rule. More important, however, in my opinion is the fact that this book (along with the other books in the series) makes Baltic languages better known in functional-typological linguistics. The papers in the volume provide us with interesting previously uninvestigated data and new insights into already studied questions.

The book is divided into three parts (in addition to the introduction): causatives, middle phenomena and passives. The first part comprises three papers discussing causatives in Lithuanian and Latvian (one paper on Lithuanian, two on Latvian). The second part consists of two papers, which deal with middle-voice reflexives and reflexive converses. Finally, the third part includes three papers on passives. It is perhaps an interesting detail that despite the rather strong functional-typological orientation

of the book the last part also comprises two papers whose approach is clearly more formal in nature. This usually presents some kind of problem in most volumes where this has been done (at least in my view), because the papers in the framework one is not familiar with are usually harder to read, but in the present volume the more formally oriented papers are accessible to those as well who do not have an extensive training in formal linguistics. The theory-internal argumentation may appear less relevant, but the data discussed is of interest in any case. Overall, the book builds very well on the success of the previous volume (Holvoet & Nau 2014). The authors of all papers unarguably represent top scholars in the field of Baltic linguistics, which guarantees a very high overall quality of the papers (many of the authors are somehow involved in publishing the current journal as well). It is also noteworthy that all papers have adopted a very empirical, corpus-driven approach to the problems studied. Elicited examples are used only rarely. These aspects further add to the overall merits of the book; only by using real empirical data on any topic can we learn how the constructions studied are actually used instead of mostly speculating on this (see, however, my mild criticisms on this below). The diachronic aspect is very valuable to typological studies on the topics discussed, because in typology discussions based on actual diachronic data can be considered luxury.

It should also be noted that the contributions contain numerous cross-references to other papers in the volume, which in most places broadens the perspective on the problems and aids in avoiding unnecessary repetition, making the volume a coherent whole and underlining its contrastive stance. For example, there is one paper on the passive in Latvian, and one on Lithuanian, which renders a very detailed discussion of the passives in both languages possible. The book is not the kind of collection of papers where the introduction discusses various themes seen in the papers, but the individual papers are independent of each other.

The first paper “Voice in Baltic: An overview” by the editors offers a concise introduction to the notion of voice in Baltic languages. The paper naturally also serves as an introduction to the other papers in the volume, but primarily it introduces the notion of voice from a general perspective. It is worth noting that voice is understood in a somewhat broader sense, since causatives are also included in the notion. In other words, all argument-structure alternations are viewed as belonging together, which is justified by their relation to the notion of transitivity (all of them affect

transitivity in different ways). Since the authors are well informed on the notion from a broad cross-linguistic and theoretical perspective, the chapter constitutes a good introduction to the topic in more general terms as well (even though the focus naturally lies on Baltic languages).

The second paper (and the first paper of the second part) “Lithuanian morphological causatives: A corpus-based study” by Peter Arkadiev and Jurgis Pakerys discusses the causative constructions of Lithuanian from a strong typological perspective. The discussion concerns, for example, the form, origin and productivity of different causative suffixes, and the cross-linguistically rather peculiar (valency-rearranging) curative causatives (where the number of arguments is not affected) are also discussed in detail. Moreover, ingestive verbs are shown to behave differently from other transitive verbs with respect to formation and argument structure of causatives (see also, e.g. Næss 2007 for a detailed discussion of this). What I also found interesting is that even impersonals like ‘rain’ may be causativized occasionally in Lithuanian, while more expectedly causativization of ditransitives is more restricted (see Kittilä 2007 and 2009 for the discussion of the more restricted causativization of three-place verbs across languages). The third paper “Morphological causatives in contemporary Latvian” by Nicole Nau complements the previous paper very well, since here the Latvian causatives are discussed from largely the same perspective as the Lithuanian causatives in the chapter by Arkadiev and Pakerys. The paper makes an important contribution to our understanding of causatives, because Latvian causatives have not received very much attention in previous studies (while there has been at least some literature on the Lithuanian causatives, critically reviewed by Arkadiev & Pakerys). The author does a very good job in discussing the different types of causatives and in showing that from a synchronic point of view Latvian causatives seem unsystematic in that the choice of a given causative construction seems arbitrary, and, for example Dixon’s (2000) features are not relevant to causative formation in Latvian. Different types (e.g., fusional vs. derivational) of causatives are distinguished in the paper, all of which are given proper treatment.

The next paper “Extended uses of morphological causatives in Latvian” by Axel Holvoet is also concerned with Latvian, but in contrast to the previous paper, the focus is on the less typical uses of the causatives in this language. These include intransitive uses of causatives (where the causer is backgrounded) and cases where causativization adds an argu-

ment that, however, is not a typical causer, and also cases where causativization does not increase the number of arguments (which is naturally the canonical function of causatives), but rather results in a reshuffling of grammatical relations. The findings correspond to some extent to the findings in my 2009 paper, but the paper also discusses some other types overlooked by me, such as the causative-iterative polysemy attested in Latvian. One of the intriguing findings is the relevance of verbs of light/sound emission for the extended uses of causatives. The paper naturally broadens our scope to causatives in Latvian (and hopefully also elsewhere) in discussing uses that usually lie outside of studies on causatives.

The first paper of the second part “Reflexives and middle voice”, namely “Middle voice reflexives and argument structure in Baltic” by Axel Holvoet, Marta Grzybowska and Agnieszka Rembiałkowska, deals with reflexives covering the semantic domain of middle voice in a narrower sense. It is shown that the middle-voice constructions discussed do not represent a valency-decreasing mechanism as anti-causatives do. The paper also discusses similar constructions in Slavic and Germanic languages, which broadens the perspective on the discussed phenomenon. I found the paper very inspiring; for example, it made me realize for the first time that the Finnish intransitive reflexive is rather limited in its use and is basically attested only for body grooming, which is among the most typical uses of middles across languages (see also Kemmer 1993). The paper also suggests an interesting semantic map for middle-voice reflexives and discusses their diachronic extension to other functions. The sixth paper of the volume, “Converse relations with the reflexive marker in Lithuanian and Polish” by Björn Wiemer and Marta Grzybowska, is a lengthy discussion of reflexive-marker (RM) converses (cases that are related to each other by the presence vs. absence of RM) and their relation to anti-causatives, cf.

- (1a) Lithuanian (Wiemer & Grzybowska 2015, 212)
- | | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| <i>ežer-o</i> | <i>plynum-a</i> | <i>at-spindėj-o</i> |
| lake-GEN.SG | flat_surface-NOM.SG | PFX-reflect-PST.3 |
| <i>debes-is</i> | | |
| cloud-ACC.PL | | |
| ‘The flat surface of the lake reflected the clouds’ | | |
- (1b) *debes-ys* *at-si-spindėj-o* *ežer-o*
 cloud-NOM.PL PFX-RFL-reflect-PST.3 lake-GEN.SG

plynum-oje

flat_surface-LOC.SG

'The clouds were being reflected in/by the flat surface of the lake'

The languages discussed serve the purposes of the paper very well, because in both languages RM fulfills a wide range of functions. The paper constitutes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of the phenomenon also from a theoretical perspective, since the paper starts with a very long general introduction to the topic. In addition to the semantics and functions of the constructions, the differences between arguments and adjuncts are also examined. Moreover, the paper discusses the different types of agents that are possible in RM-converses, which is, at least in my view, relevant to the discussion of passives as well. The number of RM-converses here is much higher than in Geniušienė's (1987) seminal study on the topic. The paper is at times rather hard to read, since it includes an array of acronyms, which are all properly explained, but the reader may nevertheless occasionally get lost.

The third part of the volume "Passives" contains three papers, the first of which, 'Passivization and argument structure in Lithuanian' by Cori Anderson, deals with passives in Lithuanian from a generative perspective focusing on case marking and telicity and their relation to passivization. The focus of the paper is on the so-called oblique passives (even though 'normal' passives are also discussed), where the original object appears in a case form other than the default accusative. It is shown that differences in grammaticality of the passive construction discussed are best explained by event structure, because oblique passives are usually derived only from clauses that describe clear actions. The paper makes an important contribution to the understanding of passives in the generative framework, where oblique passivization has been claimed to be impossible (see, e.g. Woolford 2006, 118). The second paper, "Solving the puzzle of the Lithuanian passive" by Birutė Spraunienė, Auksė Razanovaitė and Erika Jasionytė, discusses the status of Lithuanian constructions involving a non-agreeing passive participle. It is in order to note that this construction has been discussed in numerous theoretically oriented papers (starting with Timberlake 1982), but this paper is among the very few that actually presents new and broad empirical data. The paper suggests that impersonal passives are better analyzed as morphosyntactic imper-

sonals in the spirit of Blevins (2003). However, this does not apply to all constructions discussed, since an analysis of some of them as personal passives with non-canonical subjects is also plausible. Finally, evidential passives are not viewed as passives at all, but rather as active evidentials with overt genitival subjects and ‘spurious’ passive morphology. Both of the papers on Lithuanian passives deal primarily with less typical passives, and thus contribute to the theoretical discussion of passives and related constructions. The last paper of the third part and the whole volume is Axel Holvoet’s paper “Latvian passives—personal, impersonal and evidential”. The focus of the paper lies on the impersonal passive, and the author shows that these constructions in Latvian are best analyzed as impersonal passives instead of active impersonals. The most intriguing part of the paper for me is, however, the lengthy discussion of the so-called evidential passive, which is typical of Baltic languages in general. The emergence of evidential passives (which, for example, allow double passivization underlining their non-canonical nature as passives) also sheds light on the emergence of the passivization of unaccusatives. Evidential passives are passives neither semantically nor syntactically, and their use with unaccusatives naturally explains the occurrence of unaccusative passives in Baltic languages. As the previous paper, the last paper of the volume also includes a discussion of the status of Latvian passives: in which respects they resemble passives and in which respects they should rather be seen as impersonals. I find the discussion of evidential passives and their contribution to explaining the distribution of passives in the Baltic languages the most interesting aspect of the last part of the volume. The discussion may also be highly relevant to the study of similar developments in, e.g., languages with adversative passives.

As is clear from the rather lengthy discussion of the papers in the volume above, the book at hand has clear merits, and anyone interested in the notion of voice in Baltic languages, or in voice in more general terms, should read it. However, as with any book on any topic in linguistics (or perhaps/probably in any scientific discipline), there are always things that one finds less than totally satisfactory, and that one might have done otherwise. The first of the flaws can simultaneously be considered a plus in other respects. This is related to the use of authentic examples in the book. As noted above, the use of genuine examples instead of elicited ones should naturally be seen as a plus in the sense that examples from real corpora tell us much more about how the studied constructions are

really used. Many of the findings in the papers would not have been possible without the numerous properly glossed and discussed examples. However, many of the examples are very long and since many chapters contain numerous examples, going through them all carefully can be rather exhausting for anyone not familiar with the discussed languages. But this is the price we need to pay for having genuine examples in such studies. The relevant parts are bold-faced, which naturally helps a bit. Another problem of this kind is presented by the use of unglossed examples in the main text itself. These examples are in many cases rather central to the problems discussed, but they are harder to follow due to their style of presentation. Moreover, the languages are shown to have many different instances of, for example, causatives, and it is not always clear which instance/type we are dealing with. Naturally the type of examples the book contains are extremely interesting and helpful for those who are familiar with the two languages, but the nature of the examples makes it harder for non-specialists to follow the discussion. Sometimes it is also hard to follow the comparison of the languages discussed due to their similarities, but the authors are naturally not to blame for this. Finally, some of the papers contain terminology (including, e.g., the aforementioned curative causatives) that is probably known to anyone working in Baltic linguistics, but that is not shared by those working, e.g., in linguistic typology or with some other languages. At times, spelling out or rather repeating the employed acronyms would have made the discussion easier to follow.

The present book is a collection of papers on Baltic linguistics and as such it naturally focuses on what is most relevant for Baltic languages, but, as noted above, one of the clear merits of the book is that most of the authors also have a solid background in functional-typological and theoretical linguistics, which makes the volume appealing to typologists as well. However, I think that the authors could have stressed some of the most intriguing aspects of the languages in somewhat more detail. For example, I find the discussion of Latvian causatives by Nau highly interesting. The paper clearly shows that the attested variation in the use of causatives (which are numerous in Latvian) does not follow from the parameters Dixon (2000) suggests for formal variation in causatives across languages. This aspect is noted by Nau in her paper (see, e.g., page 81), but since Dixon's list has gained recognition in studies of causatives, this could have been highlighted a bit more. I am confident that anyone interested in causatives would find this discussion highly inter-

esting and it would broaden our view on causatives. On the other hand, the papers on passives discuss the personal vs. impersonal nature of the Baltic passives in great detail, for example in light of Blevins (2003). As a general typologist, I find this discussion less stimulating and relevant to our understanding of the notion of passive, because all the constructions discussed in these chapters do deal with passives if the construction is defined as an agent-defocusing strategy regardless of their exact nature and the label we use to refer to them. These discussions are probably relevant to how passive is defined in more formally oriented linguistics, but I find it harder to see the relevance of this discussion for typology. In general, I find the papers on causatives the most inspiring part of the book, and thus more detailed theoretically oriented discussions on the topics scrutinized would have been welcome. Axel Holvoet's paper on the non-prototypical uses of Latvian causatives is also a very interesting contribution to our overall understanding of causatives from a somewhat novel perspective. Especially, the causative-iterative polysemy and the use of certain causative forms for expressing both direct and indirect causation deserve to be mentioned in this respect. Moreover, valency-rearranging causatives seem to be typical of Baltic languages, which is an interesting phenomenon from a cross-linguistic perspective given the canonically valency-increasing nature of causatives. The so-called curative causatives are shown to be semantically practically identical to basic transitive clauses, which makes their occurrence highly interesting. Focusing on these aspects would make the book more appealing to general typologists, but of course the chosen focus is fully understandable and also natural, because the book has appeared in a series devoted to Baltic languages. In any case, the present book hopefully brings Baltic languages into the spotlight of forthcoming studies of voice.

In addition to obvious scientific merits, such as detailed discussions of the examined phenomena in light of genuine examples, one of the defining characteristics of a good book is that it raises questions, gives ideas, and makes one think about potentially old problems from a new perspective. In this respect, the present book unarguably presents an important piece of scientific research. As for myself, the book gave me many fresh ideas on different topics related to voice. First of all, as already noted above, it made me think about the differences between transitive and intransitive reflexives in Finnish from a novel perspective (see my note on this above). Second, the causative-iterative polysemy was not known to

me, but Axel Holvoet discusses many instances of this in Latvian, and also other languages have been reported to display this polysemy (see, e.g., Kulikov 1999). Iterativity is closely related to dynamicity, a feature that is associated with causatives cross-linguistically. Also the lengthy discussions of curative causatives raise many questions, and made me think about the semantics of multiple causativization in Finnish. Finnish allows multiple causativization of most verbs morphologically, but semantically most instances of multiple causativization become very difficult to process and are consequently rare in actual language use.

To summarize, the present volume is an interesting collection of papers dealing with different voice phenomena and argument marking in Baltic languages, from a comparative Baltic and partly also cross-linguistic perspective. For some of the constructions discussed, the book comprises one paper on Latvian and one on Lithuanian, which makes it possible to examine the given topic in more detail. The book is not a coherent whole in the sense that it does not include one ‘target paper’ that all other papers somehow consider and discuss from a certain perspective; rather, all the papers are individual papers discussing ‘the topic of their choice’. However, this is not a problem, but actually quite the opposite, because in this case the range of topics is wider than it would have been if all the papers had discussed, e.g., the functions of passives in Baltic languages. The book is appealing to both people working in Baltic linguistics and scholars working on the notion of voice from a broad cross-linguistic perspective. First, research in Baltic linguistics has been rather historically oriented, while the perspective chosen in the present book is more synchronic and typological-functional in nature. Second, the papers in the volume bring Baltic languages into the spotlight in typological studies of voice due to its strong functional-typological take on the discussed topics. Even though, as noted above, some of the most intriguing aspects, such as the secondary uses of causatives, could have been focused on more, the discussions in the papers nevertheless open new perspectives on the phenomena scrutinized.

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