

On discontinuative action nominals in Lithuanian: Addendum et corrigendum to Arkadiev (2011)

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In my paper (Arkadiev 2011, 57–58) dealing with aspectual uses of the Lithuanian ‘external’ prefix *be-* I say that action nominalizations cannot co-occur with *be-* in its continuative meaning. I based my observation on the fact that the native speakers of Lithuanian whom I had consulted had rejected such word forms as **tebe-miegoj-im-as* CNT-sleep-NML-NOM.SG (intended meaning ‘the fact of being still asleep’) and *ne-be-dainav-im-as* NEG-CNT-sing-NML-NOM.SG (intended meaning ‘the fact of being no longer singing’), my examples (37a, b) from Arkadiev (2011, 58).

However, this statement of mine has to be qualified in the light of the data from Lithuanian corpora. The Corpus of Lithuanian Language (LKT, tekstynas.vdu.lt) attests about twenty deverbal event nominals formed by the productive suffixes *-im-*, *-ym-* containing the negative continuative (discontinuative) prefix *nebe-*¹, all in all yielding about 40 examples. Most such nominals are attested just once; those which are found in more than one context include *nebegalėjimas* ‘the fact that one is no longer able’ (from *galėti* ‘can’, 7 examples), *nebeatitikimas* ‘the fact that there is no longer a correspondence’ (from *atitikti* ‘correspond’, 2 examples), *nebedalyvavimas* ‘the fact of no longer participating’ (from *dalyvauti* ‘participate’, 2 examples), *nebepasitikėjimas* ‘the fact of no longer trusting’ (from *pasitikėti* ‘trust’, 2 examples), and *nebetikėjimas* ‘the fact of no longer believing’ (from *tikėti* ‘believe’, 2 examples).

¹ It must be noted that since LKT does not have morphological annotation, I had to limit my searches to the nominative singular forms of deverbal nominals (i. e., strings ending in *imas* and *ymas*); of course, more data would have been yielded by searching for other case-number forms.

Some illustrative examples of the use of such discontinuative deverbal nominals are given below. They clearly indicate that the discontinuative operator introduced by the prefix *nebe-* falls in the scope of the nominalization.

- (1) *Tyl-a, stoj-us-i po*
 silence-NOM.SG set-PST.PA-NOM.SG.F after
kvaišinanči-o triukšm-o, atrod-ė kaip
 deafening-GEN.SG.M noise-GEN.SG seem-PST(3) as
ne-be-gyven-im-as.
 NEG-CNT-live-NML-NOM.SG
 ‘The silence which arose after the deafening noise seemed like when life stopped.’ (lit. no longer living)
- (2) *atmint-is — tai ne vien pasyv-us*
 memory-NOM.SG that NEG just passive-NOM.SG.M
ne-be-galėj-im-as atsikraty-ti vien-ą
 NEG-CNT-can-NML-NOM.SG throw.off-INF one-ACC.SG
kart-ą jau įsirėž-us-io
 time-ACC.SG already cut.into-PST.PA-GEN.SG.M
įspūdži-o.
 impression-GEN.SG
 ‘Memory is not just no longer being able to get rid of an impression that had already once become etched.’
- (3) *Žem-ė, kaip kempin-ė, permerkt-a*
 land-NOM.SG as sponge-NOM.SG soaked-NOM.SG.F
krauj-u. J-i vert-a krauj-o!
 blood-INS.SG 3-NOM.SG.F worthy-NOM.SG.F blood-GEN.SG
Ir aukščiausi-a j-os kain-a —
 and highest-NOM.SG.F 3-GEN.SG.F price-NOM.SG
ne-be-sugrįž-im-as j-on!
 NEG-CNT-return-NML-NOM.SG 3-ILLAT.SG.F
 ‘The land, like a sponge, is soaked with blood. It is worth blood! And the highest price for it (i.e. land) is being no longer able to come back to it.’

All this suggests that, though certainly infrequent, discontinuative event nominals are a productive and robustly established phenomenon of Lithuanian grammar. This is in sharp contrast with positive continu-

ative event nominals in *tebe-*, for which my statement from the 2011 article still holds: I could not find a single example of event nominals with the prefix *tebe-* in LKT, and similar results are yielded by Google searches: while such discontinuative event nominals as *nebegalėjimas* ‘no longer being able’ or *nebetikėjimas* ‘no longer believing’ are attested by hundreds of examples, their positive counterparts **tebegalėjimas* and **tebetikėjimas* do not occur on the Internet at all.

In addition to that it is worth mentioning that the discontinuative *nebe-* can even marginally co-occur with situation-denoting nominals with no direct or morphologically productive relation with verbs. Thus, on Google one can find such nouns as *nebenoras* ‘that one no longer wants’ (from *noras* ‘wish’, a morphologically opaque nominalization of *norėti* ‘want’, ca. 50 examples) and even *nebeūpas* ‘that one no longer is in a mood’ (from *ūpas* ‘mood’, 2 examples), cf. the following sentences:

- (4) *pirm-ieji požymi-ai, jog laik-as į*
 first-NOM.PL.M.DEF sign-NOM.PL that time-NOM.SG in
mokykl-q ... ne-be-nor-as ei-ti į
 school-ACC.SG NEG-CNT-wish-NOM.SG go-INF in
daržel-į, miego-ti piet-ų mieg-o.
 kindergarten-ACC.SG sleep-INF noon-GEN.PL sleep-GEN.SG
 ‘the first signs that time has come (for the child) to go to
 school are when (the child) no longer wants to go to kinder-
 garten, to sleep after lunch.’ (www.pasvalys.lt)
- (5) *Va ir baig-ė-si mano dviratuk-as, su*
 so and finish-PST(3)-RFL my bicycle-NOM.SG with
kreiv-u kažkaip ne-be-ūp-as važiuo-t.
 crooked-INS.SG.M somehow NEG-CNT-mood-NOM.SG drive-INF
 ‘So here my bicycle has come to an end, I am somehow not
 in a mood to ride a crooked one.’ (<http://www.gerasdviratis.lt/forum/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=21294>)

Here again, there are no corresponding nominals with the positive continuative in *tebe-* (though one example of *tebenoras* ‘continuous wish’ is found on Google, it cannot be considered fully significant). Such a sharp contrast between the negative and the positive variants of the Lithuanian continuative morphological marker with respect to event nominals constitutes a further argument (in addition to those

adduced in Arkadiev 2011, 54–55, 69–72) that the complex prefixes *tebe-* and *nebe-* do not just differ in polarity, but are in fact synchronically non-compositional morphological operators with distinct morphosyntactic properties.

To conclude, this shows how important it is not to base one's statements about (non)existence of particular linguistic phenomena just on elicited data and native speaker judgments, but to take into account corpus evidence as well.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative, CNT — continuative, DEF — definite, F — feminine, GEN — genitive, ILLAT — illative, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NML — nominalization, NOM — nominative, PA — active participle, PL — plural, PST — past tense, RFL — reflexive, sg — singular.

REFERENCES

ARKADIEV, PETER. 2011. On the aspectual uses of the prefix *be-* in Lithuanian. *Baltic Linguistics* 2, 37–78.