

Another 'look!' (to the left and to the right): The Latvian particle *lūk* in parliamentary discourse

The particle *lūk* belongs to a small class of Latvian pragmatic particles that have developed from imperatives, mostly of sensory verbs. *Lūk* differs from the other members of this class in that (i) it is less strongly associated with its source verb *lūkot* (today mainly 'try', less often 'look' and other meanings) and more frequent than it, and (ii) it is not colloquial but appears in formal and informal varieties of spoken and written discourse. In this paper I will analyze its use and functions as attested in the corpus SAEIMA, compiled from transcripts of sittings of the Latvian parliament. In this corpus, *lūk* has a frequency of 298.2 per million (N = 6560), which is remarkably higher than its frequency in the balanced corpus LVK2018 (59.92 per million, N = 736). This difference reflects its main uses, which can be roughly characterized as that of presenting, evaluating and stressing facts within an argumentation.

A main goal of this paper is to establish in which way different functions are bound to different positions of the particle and whether *lūk* is developing a "right-margin" use (if so, it would be the first of the particles in this particular group).

Lūk is typically found within a longer turn of one speaker, rarely starting or closing a turn. It may point ahead to the following stretch of speech, or backwards to what has been stated in the preceding clause. In the first case its position is either at the left margin of a clause or non-clausal unit (after a subordinator or complementizer), or parenthetically within a clause. Two main functions may be distinguished, presentation and represented speech.

A. Presentation of facts and arguments from the speakers perspective; in this use *lūk* is a presentative particle, similar to French *voici* in one of its uses; see Porhiel (2012) on French *voici* and *voilà*; Petit (2010) on presentative particles in Baltic languages.

- (1) [...] *traucē attīstīties mūsu uzņēmējiem un arī mūsu ekonomikai. Lūk, piemērs:*
'[...] impede the development of our businessmen and also of our economy. **Here is** an example:'
- (2) *Es gribētu, lūk, ko.*
1SG.NOM want.IRR PTC what.ACC 'Here is what I want.'

Represented speech and thought, real or imagined, mostly with a negative stance. This use seems to be especially frequent in the SAEIMA corpus.

- (3) *iedzīvotājiem stāsta, ka tarifi esot jāceļ tādēļ,*
resident.DAT.PL tell.PRS.3 that rate.NOM.PL be.EVI DEB.raise therefore
ka, lūk, "Latvenergo" neesot naudas,
that PTC Latvenergo NEG.be.EVI money.GEN.SG
ar ko sakārtot gaisa vadus
with WHAT.ACC fix.INF air.GEN.SG line.ACC.PL
'residents are told that the rates have to be raised (they say) because allegedly Latvenergo doesn't have money to fix the aerial lines'

When pointing to the preceding stretch of speech, *lūk* typically forms a textual unit of its own, often accompanied by other particles such as *nu* or *tā*. It stresses the speaker's viewpoint and affirms her/his preceding statement.

Affirmation

(4) *Ja jūs maldāties, man nav jāpiekrīt jums. Lūk!*

'If you are wrong, I don't have to agree with you. LŪK!'

(5) *Šodien mēs esam nonākuši līdz tādai situācijai, ka mums zeme vairs nepieder. Mēs esam cits citam parādā un vēl arī daudziem ārzemniekiem. Nu, lūk!*

'Today we have arrived at a situation where we don't own [our] land anymore. We are in debts, owing each other as well as to many foreigners. **That's how it is!**'

It seems that in none of its uses *lūk* is addressee oriented. While it mostly occurs in situations where speakers are making a point and express stance, the speakers do not seek for agreement nor even invite any response. It may be that the lack of such intersubjective meanings prevents *lūk* to fuse with the previous utterance and become an element of the right margin or acquire a turn-yielding function. Prosodic characteristics are difficult to investigate on a larger scale, as the transcriptions are not time-aligned to the recordings of the parliament sessions, which are however freely available. I will however examine a couple of selected examples and present preliminary findings on prosodic features of *lūk* in the different positions and functions outlined here.

This study will contribute to the cross-linguistic study of functions at the left and the right margin (Traugott 2012; Beeching & Detges, eds. 2014) and to that of particles originating in forms of perception verbs (Fagard 2010; Aijmer & Elgemark 2013).

References

Aijmer, Karin & Elgemark, Anna. 2013. The pragmatic markers *look* and *listen* in a cross-linguistic perspective. In Johannesson, Nils-Lennart, Melchers, Gunnel and Beyza Björkman (eds.), *Of butterflies and birds, of dialects and genres. Essays in honour of Philip Shaw*, 333-348. Stockholm: University.

Beeching, Kate & Detges, Ulrich (eds.). 2014. *Discourse functions at the left and right periphery: Cross-linguistic investigations of language use and language change*. Leiden: Brill.

Fagard, Benjamin. 2010. É vida, olha...: Imperatives as discourse markers and grammaticalization paths in Romance: A diachronic corpus study. *Languages in Contrast* 10(2): 245-267.

Petit, Daniel. 2010. On presentative particles in the Baltic languages. In Nau, Nicole & Ostrowski, Norbert, eds., *Particles and connectives in Baltic*, 151-170. Vilnius: Vilnius University.

Porhiel, Sylvie. 2012. The presentative *voici/voilà* – Towards a pragmatic definition. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44 (2012) 435–452

Traugott, Elizabeth Closs. 2012. Intersubjectification and clause periphery. *English Text Construction* 5(1): 7-28.