

## Vielfaltslinguistik IV. Bremen, 4.-5. Juni 2021

### 1. Introduction

**Context:** Analyses of a corpus of Latgalian folktales published in 1895, looking for patterns and emergent constructions typical for oral storytelling

**Source:** Ulanowska 1895; digitalized and online at: <http://inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl/Frontend/Text/1>

Bridging constructions: Comparative concept proposed by Guérin & Aiton (2019)

A bridging construction is a linkage of three clauses. The first clause of the construction (i.e., the reference clause) is the final clause in a unit of discourse. The second clause (i.e., the bridging clause) recapitulates the reference clause. It usually immediately follows the reference clause but it acts as the initial (albeit non-main) clause of a new discourse unit. The primary discourse function of a bridging construction is to add structure and cohesion: recapitulation backgrounds the proposition of the reference clause and foregrounds the clause following the bridging clause. This third clause is discourse-new and typically sequentially ordered. (Guérin & Aiton 2019, 2-3)

Recapitulative linkage (p. 4):

(3) Nahavaq (Oceanic, Vanuatu; Dimock 2009: 259)

- a. *...en re-tur-gcor no-pon no-qond.*  
and 3PL-sew-block N.PREF-opening N.PREF-basket  
'...and they sewed up the opening of the basket.'
- b. *Re-tur-gcor no-pon no-qond, re-gcur i-gcisgces.*  
3PL-sew-block N.PREF-opening N.PREF-basket 3PL-cause 3SG-tight  
'After they sewed up the opening of the basket, they tightened it.'

### 2. Backstitching and coherence in episodes

Example: The kind girl shakes the apple tree (ATU 480), German and Latgalian

(1) German: Frau Holle (Grimm & Grimm 1812)

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. Darnach ging es weiter                            | 'After that she went on,'         |
| b. und kam zu einem <b>Baum</b> ,                    | 'and came to a tree,'             |
| c. der hing voll <b>Aepfel</b>                       | 'which was laden with apples'     |
| d. und rief ihm zu:                                  | 'and called to her:'              |
| e. „ach! <b>schüttel</b> mich! <b>schüttel</b> mich! | 'oh, shake me, shake me!'         |
| f. wir <b>Aepfel</b> sind allemiteinander reif!“     | 'we apples are alltogether ripe!' |
| g. Da schüttelt' es den <b>Baum</b> ,                | 'So she shook the tree'           |
| h. daß die <b>Aepfel fielen</b> , als regenten sie,  | 'that the apples fell like rain'  |
| i. solange bis keiner mehr oben war,                 | 'until none was left on top.'     |
| j. darnach ging es wieder fort.                      | 'After that she went away again.' |

Keywords: *Baum* 'tree', *Aepfel* 'apples', *schütteln* 'shake', *fallen* 'fall'

Pattern: Protagonist moves into the scene – acts – moves out of the scene

(2) Latgalian (B27)

a. otkon jei īt, again she go.PRS.3	'She walks on'
b. da-īt jei pi uobeļnicys, PVB-go.PRS.3 she to apple_tree.GEN.SG	'and comes to an apple tree'
c. verās, aug uobeļnica, look.PRS.3 grow.PRS.3 apple_tree.NOM.SG	'she sees there grows an apple tree'
d. vysi zori leikst all.NOM.PL.M branch.NOM.PL bend.PRS.3 nu uobelim. from apple.DAT.PL	'all its branches laden with apples'
e. Jei prosa: she ask.PRS.3	'It asks:'
f. "Meitiņ milū, ap-krot girl.VOC dear.VOC PVB-shake.IMP.2SG munus uobeļišus, - my.ACC.PL.M apple.DIM.ACC.PL	'Dear girl, shake my apples down!'
g. ka tu mani na-ap-krateisi, if 2SG.NOM 1SG.ACC NEG-PVB-shake.FUT.2SG	'If you don't shake me free'
h. vysi zori ap-lyuzs!" – all.NOM.PL.M branch.NOM.PL PVB-break.FUT.3	'all the branches will break off!'
i. Jei īt, ap-kreit uobeli, she go.prs.3 PVB-fall.PRS.3 apple.NOM.PL	* (she goes, the apples fall / she shakes the apple tree)
j. ap-krot-use uobeli, PVB-shake-PST.PA.SG.F ?	** (having shaken the apple tree / the apples)
k. īt jei paceļu go.PRS.3 she away	'she goes away.'

Keywords: **uobeļnica** 'apple tree', **uobeļs** 'apple', **uobeļits** 'apple (diminutive)', **uobeļe** 'apple tree' (?); **krateit** (PRS.3 krotā) 'shake', causative of **krist** (PRS.3 kreit) 'fall'

What Šmits, the editor of the collection *Latviešu pasakas un teikas* (1925-1937) did with clauses i. and j. (<http://valoda.ailab.lv/folklor/pasakas/gr05/0502109.htm>)

(3) Jei īt, ap-krota uobeļnicu she go.PRS.3 PVB-shake.PRS.3 apple_tree.ACC.SG	'She goes, shakes the apple tree'
ap-krotusja uobeļus, PVB-shake.PST.PA.SG.F apple.ACC.PL	'having shaken down the apples'.

Pattern for Latgalian:

Protagonist moves in – acts and finishes acting – moves out

Construction (?): Clause (finite V) – echo clause (past active participle) – following clause (motion)

(4) The pattern in a short episode (B20; ATU 15 The theft of butter (honey) by playing godfather)

- a. *Nu, i nū-īt jei da sovys mads bucenis*  
 PTC and PVB-go.PRS.3 she to RPOSS.GEN.SG.F honey.GEN keg.GEN.SG  
 ‘Well, it (= the fox) went to the honey keg’
- b. *i iz-ād jau vysu madu da dybyna,*  
 and PVB-eat.PRS.3 already all.ACC.SG honey.ACC to bottom.GEN.SG  
 ‘and ate up all the honey to the bottom.’
- c. *iz-ād-use at-īt atpaka!*  
 PVB-eat-PST.PA.SG.F PVB-go.PRS.3 back  
 ‘Having eaten, it went back.’

Is this a bridging construction? Compare with features listed by Guérin & Aiton (2019)

- ✓ three clauses: reference clause, bridging clause, third clause (movement away)
- ✓ bridging clause marked as non-main clause (participle)
- ✓ recapitulates main clause
- ✓ adds structure and cohesion
- ✓ backgrounds the proposition of the reference clause
- does not appear at the beginning, but at the end of a discourse unit (paragraph)

Conclusion: a “backwards-looking” bridging construction emerging from backstitching

Example of a similar construction in Khwarshi (Tsezic, Northeast Caucasian)

(5) Khwarshi (Z. Khalilova, p.c.)

- a. *c'odora-y bala-l k'oλ-un, y-ac'-bič lux-un*  
 clever-II corner-LAT jump-CVB, II-eat-PROH remain-CVB  
lux-u-so golluč kad-ba b-ac'-un  
 stay-PST.PTCP-DEF all girl-PL HPL-eat-PST.UW  
 ‘In order not to be eaten the clever one jumped into the wooden trunk, (the wolf) ate the rest of girls.’
- b. *kad-ba=n b-ac'-un, m-ok'-še b-eč-un boc'o*  
 girl-PL=ADD HPL-eat-CVB, III-go-ICVB III-be-PST.UW wolf(III)  
*yon-o-t-yul*  
 forest-OBL-INTER-ALL  
 ‘Having eaten the girls, the wolf went to the woods.’

(Forker & Anker 2019)

However, in Tsezic languages these construction are in the minority, while most bridging constructions are at the beginning of paragraphs (“forward-looking”).

In Latgalian, it is the other way around.

### 3. “Forward-looking” bridging in the Latgalian texts

Only typical for verbs of motion, especially marking arrival – locating actor and coming actions.

(6) “Forward-looking” bridging in the Latgalian tales (B02)

- a. *Jeī īt ar veceiti sovu dzeivuoṭ*  
 she go.PRS.3 with old\_man.DIM.ACC.SG RPOSS.ACC.SG live.INF  
*iz tom kazeṇom.*  
 to DEM.DAT.PL.F goat.DIM.DAT.PL  
 ‘She goes with her old man to the goats in order to live [there].’ = Reference clause
- b. **At-guojuši iz tom kazeṇom,**  
 PVB-go.PST.PA.PL to DEM.DAT.PL.F goat.DIM.DAT.PL  
 ‘Having arrived at the goats’ place,’ = Bridging clause
- c. *izkurinuoja jei cepli,*  
 PVB.light.Pst.3 she oven.ACC.SG  
 ‘she lit the oven,’ = Third clause
- ...

- (7) **At-brauc** *muote ar tāvu nu cīma,*  
 PVB-drive.PRS.3 mother.NOM.SG with father.ACC.SG from visit.GEN.SG  
**at-braukuse,** *sauc muote bārnu*  
 PVB-drive.PST.PA.SG.F call.PRS.3 mother.NOM.SG child.GEN.PL  
 ‘Mother and father **come back** from their visit. **Having come back**, mother calls the children.’

- (8) *Nū-īt jei kambarī, -*  
 PVB-go.PRS.3 she chamber.LOC.SG  
*ī-guojuse, redz sovys muosys nūkautys*  
 PVB-go.PST.PA.SG.F see.PRS.3 RPOSS.ACC.PL.F sister.ACC.PL kill.PST.PP.ACC.PL.F  
 ‘She **goes** into the chamber. **Having gone** in, she sees her sisters, killed.’

### 4. Other types of backstitching or bridging

Movement with simultaneous converb: backgrounding movement to foreground following (speech) act

- (9) *Īt duraks paceļu,*  
 go.PRS.3 fool.NOM.SG away  
*ī-dam-s i klīdz:*  
 go-CVB-SG.M ADD shout.PRS.3  
 ‘The fool **walks** away and **walking** shouts:’ (B14)
- (10) *Jis atzasāda i juoj*  
 he PVB.RFL.sit.PST.3 ADD ride.PRS.3  
*i juo-dam-s, soka tai:*  
 ADD ride CVB-SG.M say.PRS.3 thus  
 ‘He mounted [his horse] and **rides**, and **riding** (he) says:’(B43)

More rarely with other verbs:

- (11) A *tei* *zvejņika* *sīva* **teirej** *zivs*  
 PTC DEM.NOM.SG.F fisher.GEN.SG wife.NOM.SG clean.PRS.3 fish.ACC.PL  
*kū* *vuorēt* –  
 REL.ACC cook.INF  
**teirā-dam-a** *i* *atrūn* *jei*  
 clean-CVB-SG.F ADD find.PRS.3 she  
*tū* *gradzynu* *zivei* *vādarā*  
 DEM.ACC.SG ring.ACC.SG fish.DAT.SG belly.LOC.SG  
 ‘The fisherman’s wife **is gutting** fish to cook – **gutting**, she finds the ring in the belly of a fish.’

Positioning of a protagonist with verbs of body posture: circle

- (12) **At-za-gula** *jei* *zam* *kriumeņu*,  
 PVB-RFL.lie.PST.3 she under bush.DIM.GEN.PL  
*sa-vylka* *vysys* *zivtenis* *zam* *vādara*  
 PVB-pull.PST.3 all.ACC.PL.F fish.DIM.ACC.SG under belly.GEN.SG  
*i* *ād* **gulā-dam-a**.  
 and eat.prs.3 lie-CVB-SG.F  
 At-īt *vylks*, *soka*:  
 PVB-go.PRS.3 wolf.NOM.SG say.PRS.3  
 ‘[The fox] **lay down** under bushes, pulled all the fish under its belly and ate **lying**. A wolf came along and said:’ (B19)

Rare: Bridging clause with a future participle

(13) (B20) Converb (b.) and future participle (d.); b. and d. not in the Polish translation

- a. *Začs* *guoja* *sīna* *pļautu*, - ‘The hare went to make hay.’  
 hare.NOM.SG go.PST.3 hay.GEN.SG cut.SUP *Zajāc szedł siano kosić*
- b. **i-dam-s** **pļautu**, ‘Going to make hay,’  
 go-CVB-SG.M cut.SUP -
- c. *pajēme* *mads* *buceņu* ‘it took a keg of honey’  
 PVB.take.PST.3 honey.GEN.SG keg.DIM.ACC.SG *wziął miodu beczuļķę* –
- d. **i** **pļauškys** **jau** **sīnu**, - ‘it was ready to make hay’  
 ADD cut.FUT.PA.SG.M PTC hay.ACC.SG -
- e. *saprosa* *jis* *lopsys*, ‘it invited the fox, the wolf and other  
 PVB.ask.PRS.3 he fox.GEN.SG hares.’  
*i* *vylka*, *i* *cytu* *začu*.  
 and wolf.GEN.SG and other.GEN.PL hare.GEN.PL *zaprosił liszķę i wilki i innych zajācy.*

## 5. Conclusions

- Backstitching is a probably universal technique (or set of techniques) in oral language production.
- Bridging and other constructions may arise out of backstitching techniques in “verby” registers.
- They did not make it into European standard varieties, maybe because an aversion of repetitive structures (cf. Maas 2007).
- In 19th century Latgalian fairytales we find structures not attested in contemporary Latgalian (or Latvian), but known from many non-European languages.

## Abbreviations

1, 2, 3	first, second, third person	NOM	nominative
ACC	accusative	PA	active participle
ADD	additive particle and conjunction	PL	plural
CVB	converb	PP	passive participle
DAT	dative	PRS	present
DEM	demonstrative	PST	past
DIM	diminutive	PTC	particle
F	feminine	PVB	preverb
FUT	future	REL	relative pronoun
GEN	genitive	RFL	reflexive
IMP	imperative	RPOSS	reflexive possessive pronoun
INF	infinitive	SG	singular
M	masculine	SUP	supine
NEG	negation	VOC	vocative

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