

NICOLE NAU & NORBERT OSTROWSKI, eds. *Particles and Connectives in Baltic*. (Acta Salensia, 2.) Vilnius: Vilnius University & Asociacija “Academia Salensis”, 2010. viii + 220 p.  
ISBN 978-609-95126-1-7

Reviewed by BERT CORNILLIE, Leuven

Volume 2 of the *Acta Salensia* series contains six papers and an introduction and offers in-depth analyses of various particles and connectives in one or several Baltic languages. The contributions are written by experts in the field of Baltic linguistics, who have a sound knowledge of the literature and often cite older data which invite philological observations. The volume is mainly descriptive in nature; that is, the research questions are most often not embedded in particular theoretical frameworks. Instead, the analyses build upon insights from several theories and are based on various kinds of empirical data. Thanks to the clear descriptions, non-Baltic linguists doing research on the particles and connectives of other languages will also benefit from this volume. Moreover, the chapters touch upon several phenomena dealt with in the general-linguistic literature such as clause combining, functional syntax, grammaticalization and semantic change, and can hence be a source of inspiration for refining the traditionally used categories.

Nicole Nau and Norbert Ostrowski open the volume with a thorough introduction to the topic of particles and connectives in Baltic and in general, titled “Background and perspectives for the study of particles and connectives in Baltic languages” (p. 1–37). In this introduction, the reader gets familiarized with the rich tradition of particle research in Lithuanian (Hermann 1912, 1926) and Latvian (Bielenstein 1863; Mühlenbachs 1898), which in the presentation is nicely integrated into the broader typological overview. Many aspects of particles and connectives receive the necessary attention and the bibliographical apparatus is very full. The editors comment upon the shift in the literature from the term *conjunction*, as a grammatical category, to *connectives*, as a group of expressions with a connecting function in discourse, and also deal with the difference between particles and discourse markers. The section on the origin and development of particles and conjunctions in Baltic gives the reader an overview of the most striking cases of

decategorialization and lexicalization of Baltic connectives/particles (e.g. the Lithuanian particles *net*, *nė*, *nej*, the causal connectives *nes* and *kandangi* and the Lithuanian clitics *-te* and *-gu*, the Latvian clitic *-gi*). These paragraphs sketch very well the different research lines that can be followed. In fact, they can be considered abstracts for several promising research projects.

In their introduction the editors raise a series of important questions concerning the meaning and function of particles and connectives as well as with regard to the existing formal classifications. One crucial question is whether particles have an invariant meaning or a context-dependent meaning. Another related question is whether they should be considered polysemous or whether they are semantically vague. Additional questions concern the conversational implicatures and the subjectivity/intersubjectivity values that can be attributed to particles and connectives. As for the syntactic aspects, the division between particles and conjunctions is discussed in great detail. The editors suggest that more narrowly defined grammatical categories can help the analyst further define this division. Moreover, the question is addressed of how morphosyntactic criteria can delimit different types of connectives. Syntax and semantics come together in the discussion on whether one form with a variety of uses differing in syntactic behaviour (particle or connective) involves homonymy, polysemy or heteronymy and how dictionaries should treat these. Heteronymy will turn out to be the key term in many of the subsequent analyses.

In “As if one were not enough: on the multiple functions of Latvian *it kā* ‘as if, as though’” (p. 39–72), Joanna Chojnicka analyses the particle and the conjunction uses of *it kā*. The author first gives an overview of her corpus data and also describes how the existing dictionary entries look. The problem with these is that they do not include *it kā* as a particle but as two different words (*it* ‘quite’ and *kā* ‘like’) that can be combined (compound phrase). Chojnicka argues that *it kā* functions as a single compound word and aims to show that the two main uses of *it kā* should better be seen as heterosemic words instead of two possible functions of one word. Yet, for practical reasons, she discusses the *it kā* conjunction separately from the *it kā* particle. The author also discusses how the subjunctive mood combines with the conjunction and puts forward the two main functions of the latter: “hypothetical

comparison” and “inferred reason”. Interestingly, the latter function is linked to inferential evidentiality.

When used as a particle, *it k̄ā* can appear before a verb, which is sometimes an active participle, in a main clause. The particle can also be omitted without provoking an infelicitous sentence. The functions that Chojnicka observes for the particle uses of *it k̄ā* are very diverse and more difficult to pin down. In essence, they involve the weakening of the assertion or affirmation. The readings of *it k̄ā* can be paraphrased as ‘as if, like’, ‘seemingly, it seems so, it only seems so’ and ‘allegedly’. Special attention is paid to the indicative and the subjunctive mood possibilities. The conclusions section repeats that *it k̄ā* is a heterosemic word, but does not discuss why this is so or whether there could also be a polysemy relation between its uses. One could hypothesize that the “inferred reason” of the conjunction use is a semantic bridging context for the particle use. Chojnicka points to *it k̄ā* with a participial construction as a syntactic context that allows both the conjunction use and the particle use, but does not further develop this path. Nevertheless, this paper presents a detailed analysis of *it k̄ā* and will be an important reference for further synchronic corpus studies as well as for diachronic research.

In “Notes on complementisers in Baltic” (p. 73–101), Axel Holvoet addresses the issue of complement clauses in Lithuanian and Latvian. From a typological perspective, he investigates which syntactic and semantic distinctions are manifest in the choice of Baltic complementizers, or in the interplay of complementizers and mood. Holvoet positions the topic within the debate between generative linguistics (“complementizers are purely formal markers”) and functional linguistics (“complementizers are lexically separate modality markers”). The fact that there is a considerable degree of redundancy (and polyfunctionality) makes him conclude that the truth is in the middle. Holvoet first deals with volitional complementizers such as Latvian *lai* (‘that, in order to’) and *kaut* (‘if only’). *Lai* can combine with realis or irrealis mood, depending on the speaker’s truth values and presupposition, whereas *kaut* combines a connective function with an irrealis perspective, and, hence, has a double function. In the third part of the paper Holvoet deals with clauses expressing fear (apprehensional modality) and no volition against the background of a control continuum.

Holvoet shows that the complementizers and subordinators following apprehensional verbs vary according to the degree of control that the subject of the matrix verb displays. His article thus yields important insights on complementation in Baltic and in general. The analysis is well embedded in the typological literature, which is a real asset. Another strength of this paper is that the author considers not only the contemporary languages but also older stages. For instance, in Old Lithuanian, Holvoet finds a consistent distinction of realis and irrealis made through the choice of the complementizer (*jog* vs *kad* or *idant*), something that has been lost in modern Lithuanian.

In “Contradiction, contrast, and cause: On the functions of the Latvian particle *neba* in Internet discussions” (p. 103–133), Nicole Nau explores the uses of the particle *neba* ‘not (that)’. This word belongs to the genre of traditional folksongs and is considered archaic, but nowadays it is surprisingly often used by young and middle-aged speakers in discussions on the internet. Nau discusses reasons for the popularity of the word on online forum discussions and argues that its syntactic characteristics such as the sentence-initial position and preposed negation make it useful for argumentative dialogical texts. Moreover, *neba* would partly compensate for the lack of prosody in written discussions. Clauses introduced by *neba* may stand in a causal relation (on the text plane) to the previous clause, that is, they formulate the reason for the illocution expressed in the first clause. In other cases the clause with *neba* stands in a relation of contrast to a following clause. Grammars and dictionaries of the 19th and the early 20th century described *neba* on these grounds as a causal and adversative conjunction, but Nau argues that neither the clause-linking force nor the causal or adversative meaning are lexicalized in *neba*. Nau convincingly shows that the specific sentence-initial position of *neba* as a focus particle in internet uses does not mean that it always combines clauses on a local level. The causality and adversative readings associated with *neba* are the result of conversational implicatures that follow from performative and conceptual processes associated with *neba* such as contradiction, justification and rejection. In sum, this paper on *neba* touches upon many aspects of semantics and pragmatics that are useful for scholars interested in language change through language use.

In his paper “Latvian *jeb* ‘or’—from conditional to disjunctive

conjunction” (p. 135–150), Norbert Ostrowski is concerned with the development of the disjunctive coordinator *jeb* ‘or’ in Latvian, which he traces in Old Latvian texts, especially in those of the 17th century German pastor Georg Mancelius (Manzel). He shows that in Old Latvian *jeb* had a variety of functions: it was used in conditional (‘if’), concessive-conditional (‘even if’) and concessive (‘although’) clauses. This combination of uses nicely agrees with previous comparative-Germanic accounts by König (1985) and König & Siemund (2000). The concessive-conditional context—of counterconditions in the protasis—was a point of departure for the development of the disjunctive conjunction (‘or’). Comparing his findings to results from research on other languages, the author demonstrates how these meanings are related. He further discusses the Lithuanian cognate *jeib* ‘if’, which comes from *\*jei-bi* and the etymology of both items and their relation to the subjunctive mood of the copular verb ‘be’. In this consistent piece of research, Ostrowski presents the arguments step by step and, by doing so, avoids redundancy and unnecessary explorations. This perhaps led him to think that conclusions or a round-up summary were not necessary anymore. They would have been useful, however, since the case of *jeb* allows for a fruitful discussion of the subordination/coordination axis and could also be linked to differences with particles.

Daniel Petit’s article “On presentative particles in Baltic languages” (p. 151–170) is devoted to a class of particles that in traditional descriptions are grouped together under the category of interjection: Lithuanian *anà*, *aurè*, *šítai* (‘here is/are’), *tè* and others, Latvian *re*, *lūk*. The author first presents a broad comparative overview of presentative expressions and shows that in many languages their development seems to have been triggered by the analogy of the use of the Latin particle *ecce* in the Biblical language. Petit convincingly argues for treating presentative particles as a class in its own right. In Lithuanian and Latvian, these words display syntactic characteristics that distinguish them from local adverbs (from which several of them are derived) as well as from interjections: they always appear clause-initially, they cannot be negated, and they may form the predicate of a non-verbal clause (a noun phrase, for example). Petit also indicates that presentative particles of demonstrative origin are often accompanied by an expletive personal pronoun of the 2nd person. Hence, pragmatically

their use implies addressing a speech partner. The same syntactic and pragmatic features characterize presentative particles in other languages such as Russian, Polish, Latin and Old French. This line of research is very promising and should be continued. Against the background of the topic of this volume, the author could investigate in future research whether presentative particles can also acquire connective functions. This would be a shift from the deictic function to a more discourse-internal function and could be a contribution to the directionality of change (from connective to particle vs. from particle to connective).

In the final chapter of the volume, Björn Wiemer shows that the proper lexicographic treatment of particles and connectives requires a broad and careful investigation of all the uses of the item in question (p. 171–222). In the case he is concerned with, Lithuanian *esq*, the first problem encountered is the delimitation of lexical units, for the same sound shape is used as a participle and as a function word with several syntactic possibilities. Just as in the case of Latvian *it kā*, syntactic criteria make it possible to distinguish between the complementizer use and the particle use, which are both associated with the meaning of reportive evidentiality. As Chojnicka did, Wiemer describes this co-existence of two uses of the function word *esq* in terms of heterosemy and proposes two separate entries in the lexicographic treatment. As for the semantics–pragmatics interface, Wiemer’s analysis shows that the reportive meaning component is inherent in the particle, but not in the conjunction.

On the way to giving the best description of *esq*, the author also considers functionally related units in Lithuanian, which almost all are items indicating some sort of comparison with an unreal state, like their counterparts in Latvian, Russian and Polish. In all these analyses, Wiemer systematically describes the range of heterosemy (—are both particle and complementizer uses available?—), the range of evidential functions (—are inferential and reportive uses combined?—) and non-evidential functions (epistemic modality, comparison). In the final part of his paper, Wiemer engages in a theoretical and methodological discussion on heterosemy and polysemy. He first suggests that different heterosemic units can be included in one lexeme, as long as “difference in syntactic status is not accompanied by difference in [lexical] meaning”, but then goes on to review a series of authors who seem to

have their doubts about such an approach. Although the review of the literature is solid and interesting, the reader would have benefited from intermediate conclusions so as to know what the contribution is to the treatment of the lexical entries for *esq*. Fortunately, in the subsequent section, it is made clear that the particle *esq* and the complementizer *esq* should be considered two entries. This choice is basically made on syntactic criteria (position, dependency relations). In his consistent outline of the lexicographic entries, Wiemer convincingly argues that the particle *esq* has an inherent reportive meaning, whereas the complementizer as a linking marker does not have an independent reportive meaning nor an epistemic component by itself. These components can be implicated, however, but also be cancelled. These reflections on the semantics and pragmatics of *esq* go far beyond the difference between particles and connectives, which makes this chapter a very sound contribution to linguistic methodology in general.

This volume has clearly shown that particles and connectives in Baltic languages are a promising field for both synchronic and diachronic studies. The six papers have described and analysed very many facts, and more promise to be discovered. No doubt scholars and students in different fields of linguistics will find encouraging advice in this volume on how to develop their own semantic analysis of a specific particle or connective. Not only does this volume contribute to a better understanding of the—at first sight not very evident—relationship between particles and connectives, it also offers thorough methodological and terminological reflections. As for the terminology, I have noticed that “function word” has been used in different ways. In Chojnicka’s paper, the term was restricted to the conjunction use of *it kā*; that is, the particle use is not considered to be a function word, whereas in Wiemer’s paper, both the particle use and the conjunction use of *esq* are considered function words.

Another merit of the volume is that the papers review the literature critically and in great detail. The fact that the analyses are firmly embedded in an extensive discussion of the existing literature contributes to the overall quality of the volume. With respect to theoretical frameworks, the volume is eclectic, although a majority of papers have some relation with functional approaches. It is also very helpful that there is cross-referencing between different papers. On the other hand,

the methodological discussion of the data is somehow missing in this volume. Corpora of spontaneous data are not frequently used for the semantic descriptions, nor are there any experimental datasets. The advantages and disadvantages of specific genres and contexts could have been discussed in more detail, since this would certainly have led to a better justification of the analysis.

It may be that only few readers will read the whole volume, but even if the reader consults one chapter of the book, it is quite likely that other papers will appeal to him/her too. In sum, this volume is a valuable contribution to scholars dealing with the pragmatics and semantics of particles and conjunctions in Baltic. But this volume is more than that; general linguists may also benefit from reading the many sound analyses.

**Bert Cornillie**

*Department of Linguistics*

*Katholieke Universiteit Leuven*

*Blijde-Inkomststraat 21, B-3000 Leuven*

*bert.cornillie@arts.kuleuven.be*

## REFERENCES

- BIELENSTEIN, AUGUST. 1863. *Lettische Grammatik*. Mittau: Fr. Lucas' Buchhandlung.
- HERMANN, EDUARD. 1912. *Über die Entwicklung der litauischen Konjunctionalsätze*. Jena: Frommannsche Buchdruckerei (Hermann Pohle).
- HERMANN, EDUARD. 1926. *Litauische Studien. Eine historische Untersuchung schwachbetonter Wörter im Litauischen*. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung.
- KÖNIG, EKKEHARD. 1985. On the history of concessive connectives in English. Diachronic and synchronic evidence. *Lingua* 66, 1–19.
- KÖNIG, EKKEHARD & PETER SIEMUND. 2000. Causal and concessive clauses: Formal and semantic relations. In: Elizabeth Couper-Kuhlen & Bernd Kortmann, eds, *Cause, Condition, Concession, Contrast. Cognitive and Discourse Perspectives*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 341–360.
- MÜHLENBACHS, KĀRLIS. 1898 [2009]. *Teikums*. Reprinted in Kārlis Mīlenbahs: *Darbu izlase*. Rīga: Latviešu valodas institūts, 221–296.