(Non)Agreement of past participles in South-East Lithuanian dialects

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In Standard Lithuanian, both active and passive participles usually agree with the head for number and gender. However, in Lithuanian dialects the situation is different. It has been noted that sometimes a “generalized” plural past active participle form, or, similarly, a “neutral”, non-agreed past passive participle form can be used is used with any head, cf. [Mikulėnienė, Morkūnas 1997: 31; Vidugiris, Mikulėnienė 2005: 30; Leskauskaitė 2006: 63] etc. In my paper, I analyze this phenomenon using the Lithuanian part of the TriMCo corpus1.

The corpus data show that when used in the attributive function the participles always agree with the head for case, number and gender. However, in the predicative position, the past passive participles sometimes lack the agreement with the head. It can be due to the lack of the head (1), or the head lacking gender features (‘all’, ‘this’ and numerals, cf. (2–3)):

(1) gi pa-rašĮː-t-a gaziEt-o’j
   PTCL PVB-write-PP-NA newspaper-LOC.SG
   ‘but it's written in a newspaper’ (Pel)

(2) dabaR tai jou U˙ž-draus-t-a
   now this already PVB-forbid-PP-NA
   ‘now this is forbidden’ (Proc)

(3) sapʲciˑnʲOːlik bU˙-o’ pa-statʲʲIː-t-a to kʲ-U:
   seventeen-NOM be-PST3 PVB-build-PP-NA such-GEN.PL
   ‘seventeen such [houses] were built’ (Var)

However, agreement can also be lacking even when the head has clear gender and number features, cf. (4–6).

(4) ci cIˑlt-az bU˙-o’ pa-darIː-t-a
   there bridge-NOM.SG be-PST3 PVB-do-PP-NA
   ‘a bridge was built there’ (Var)

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1 The TriMCo corpus was created within the “Triangulation Approach for Modelling Convergence with a High Zoom-In Factor” project led by Björn Wiemer at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz; see http://www.trimco.uni-mainz.de/.
The analysis of the corpus data shows that the dependence between number of the head and the lack of agreement is statistically significant: the participles lack agreement with the head in PL more often than in SG. The factor of gender does not seem to play any important role.

The statistical analysis also shows that the lack of agreement in the past passive participles is more common in East Aukštaitian than in South Aukštaitian (the dependence between geographical distribution and the lack of agreement proves to be statistically significant).

The lack of agreement in past participles is also viewed in a more areal perspective.

References

