The supine inessive construction in Salaca Livonian

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The present paper studies the functions and possible development of the supine inessive predicate construction in Salaca Livonian against the background of the related and contact languages and language varieties. The research questions are: (i) in which functions it occurs, (ii) what could be the path of development, (iii) what kind of features the Salaca Livonian construction shares with the contact languages and varieties. The study takes the functional-typological and usage-based approach; the method is corpus-based. The material used in the analysis originates from various corpora (e.g. EDC, LLC) and the book compiled by Winkler and Pajusalu (2016).

In Salaca Livonian, the supine inessive form of the lexical verb appears in the predicate alone (1) or in combination with an auxiliary (2), the supine form of the future copula can also be the sole predicate (3). The construction is used for the expression of durative state and the imminent future but also modal readings can be found (Norvik 2010). As there is previous research on the corresponding constructions in Estonian and Finnish (e.g. Metslang 1993, 2006; Tommola 2000), but no research that would discuss the construction in a broader areal context, the objective of this paper is to fill in this gap.

(1) Voi mind näems? (SjW) ‘Are you seeing me?’
(2) Täm’ on tulmes višoštī ’im āg ’ist piūād pāl (SjW) ‘S/he is turning 15 during the holidays.’
(3) K’inge jūrs löödub, sie līms vīgali (SjW) ‘The one by whom it will be found, will be guilty.’

Whereas the Estonian and Finnish ‘be’ + supine inessive constructions are commonly attested in the absentive and the progressive reading (e.g. Metslang 1993; Tommola 2000), the Salaca Livonian examples do not reveal such readings. The progressive interpretation is regarded possible with dynamic verbs expressing ongoing action; the absentive reading is associated with an event occurring in a location away from the deictic center (Bertinetto et al. 2000). In Courland Livonian (the other Livonian variety), in turn, the absentive reading tends to be common (4) but the progressive reading rare. Thus, this also shows that there is a need to compare the functions of the construction in the cognate and contact varieties.

(4) Ma vōj’ lapstōks na’ggiri kuorrōmōs. (LLC) ‘I was [away] taking potatoes with the children.’

It is suggested for the Estonian and Finnish that the construction ‘be’ + supine inessive entered the path of development via stative periphrases (Fin. on olemassa, Est. on olemas ‘[it] exists’) (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 542). This would suggest that instances such as example (3), which contain the copula in the supine form, point to an old usage. Another possibility is that the locative construction serves as the source (see also Bybee et al. 1994), which also led to the absentive and stative readings in the case of various lexical verbs; and the instances on olemassa / on olemas presented above are manifestations of lexicalization of a stative expression (Metslang 1993).

We see two paths for the development of the sole supine predicate (see 1 and 3). First, the infinite form of the compound form may turn into a predicate as a result of the loss of the auxiliary verb. This is regarded as a probable final stage of the progressive construction (Metslang 1993). Second, in the course of insubordination of the infinite construction the main verb of the construction may become the predicate of the clause. The development of the Estonian quotative forms (originally participial forms) is explained to have followed such a path. Furthermore, the supine forms used
in the quotative function in the Estonian dialects may also have developed the same way (Kask 1984).

In our paper, we discuss the possibility of insubordination being the likely source of the development (see ex. 5 for Salaca Livonian and ex. 6 for Courland Livonian that contain the supine form). Furthermore, the oldest example (dates back to 1601) of the supine construction occurring in the Old Written Estonian is an instance of a complement. In these examples, the supine forms convey an action in progress at a particular reference time (simultaneous with an activity expressed by the finite verb).

(5) Mina tämd nāïz ratstum (SjW) ‘I saw him/her riding [a horse].’
(6) Agā ku ne jōdīzt kuod ležgōl, neiz kōpśpōis pōžō kilgs midāgid mustō vōdlōmōs (LLC)
   ‘But when they were close, the bunny boy saw something black waiting [for sth] in the bush.’

Another objective of the paper is to discuss the possible analogies in the usage of the forms. For instance, it is probable that the occurrence of the supine form in example (5) results from the Latvian influence (see ex. 7 that contains the Latvian participle ending in -am, which is not related to the supine in ex. 5). Furthermore, it is also likely that the form -ms in Salaca Livonian (e.g. ex. 1) has a model in Latvian, cf. the usage of the active present participle (ending in -dams) in ex. (8) (Endzelīns 1971: 251; see also Hewson and Bubenik 1997).

(7) Es dzirdējū viņu dziedam ‘I heard him singing.’
(8) Kur iedams? ‘Where are you going?’ (Endzelīns 1971: 251)

Preliminary results show that the Salaca Livonian construction displays functions characteristic only to an early stage of progressive constructions; no instances of real progressive constructions can be found. The path of development seems to differ from that of Courland Livonian and display areal influences.

References
LLC = Livonian Literary Corpus. (Available at http://lingua.livones.net/lv/module/, accessed September 30, 2017.)