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NOTES ON REFLEXIVITY AND CAUSATIVITY IN LITHUANIAN

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This study concerns so-called "curative" (parāpinamasis [veiksmāžodis]) or "passive causative" (neveikiamasis priežastinės [veiksmāžodis]) verbs derived from basic transitive verbs by means of the stem suffix -din, on the one hand, and the expression of identical causative meaning with non-causative verb forms, on the other; cf.:

(1) (a) (pa)sifidinti kostīma
    'to have a suit made (sewn)'
(b) sūdisintis (pasišūdisinti) kostīma
    'to have oneself a suit made (sewn)'
(c) sūdis (pasišūti) kostīma (pas sīvēja, ateljējē)
    'to have oneself a suit made (by a tailor, in a shop)'
(d) (pa)sūti kostīma (pas sīvēja, ateljējē)
    'to have a suit made (by a tailor, in a shop)'

In the examples above, (b) and (c) are synonymous (in the context provided by the spatial adverbial phrases pas sīvēja [literally] 'at a tailor's,' ateljējē 'in a shop'). Examples (1)(a) and (d) are likewise synonymous. Examples (b) and (c) differ from (a) and (d) in that they are reflexive verb forms. The subjects of the reflexive verbs are semantically interpretable as expressing both Indirect Agent ("Causer") and Beneficiary. The reflexive verbs thus serve to convey here benefactive meaning and are synonymous with the corresponding non-reflexive verb forms used with the reflexive pronoun sau in its ethical dative function, cf.:

(2) (a) Jōnas sūdinas kostīma.
    'John is having himself a suit made ("sewn").'
(b) Jōnas sūdina sau kostīma.
    'John is having himself a suit made ("sewn").'
(c) Jōnas sūvasi kostīma (pas sīvēja).
(d) Jōnas sūva sau kostīma (ateljējē).
    'John is having himself a suit made ("sewn").'

In view of the above examples, I propose to discuss briefly three main questions. First, does reflexivization (i.e., "-st-affixation") of passive causatives result in the same syntactic and semantic changes observable in other ("non-passive") causatives? Second, how is one to explain the use of non-causative verb forms for the expression of causative meaning? And third, why does Lithuanian tolerate, in most cases even prefer, in causative situations the use of non-causative verb forms, which are clearly ambiguous and subject to non-causative (mis)interpretation (i.e., Jōnas sūva[sai] kostīma can be "literally"
understood as Jónas pás síuva[sí] kostiúma 'John himself is making ["sewing"] a suit'?

According to Jakaitienė, the stem suffix -din is simply a variant of another causative suffix, -in.9 Both suffixes, -din and -in, for example, occur with intransitive verb stems to form transitive verbs, cf.:

(3) bêglit (árklj) [< bêgít 'to run']
   'to make/let (a horse) run'
(4) žéldinti (miškús; plûkusk) [< žélti 'to grow']
   'to plant (a forest); grow (one's hair) / let (one's hair) grow'

According to Stang and Otrębski, -din was not originally a suffix in its own right: the d was epenthetic and served to eliminate hiatus between a stem-final vowel and the suffix -in.9 Because its original, phonologically conditioned function has been lost, synonymous pairs of transitive verbs exhibiting the suffixes -in and -din are not uncommon, cf.:

(5) lipînti ~ lipîndinti (kă) [< lipti 'to stick']
    'to glue, stick (something)' (i.e., 'to make [something] stick')
(6) sprôgînti ~ sprôgîndinti (kă) [< sprôgît 'to burst']
    'to burst (something)' (i.e., 'to make [something] burst')

Apparently on the basis of such observations as these, Jakaitienė has concluded that curative, or passive causative, meaning is not an inherent property of the suffix -din. Instead, Jakaitienė points out that passive causative meaning is expressed only when the suffix is added to basic transitive verb stems.11 That is to say, if the suffix occurs with basic intransitive verb stems as in examples (3)-(6), the direct objects of the resulting causative verbs are Agents of the "underlying" caused action. If the same suffix occurs with transitive verbs, the resulting verb is a passive causative whose direct objects are Patients of the caused action, cf.:

(7) dusdinî (dăudeklâ) [< dûsti 'to weave']
   'to have (fabric) woven'
(8) dirbdinti (laivõj) [< dirbît 'to make']
   'to have (a boat) made'
(9) statîndinti (nâma) [< statît 'to build']
   'to have (a house) built'

Reasoning in this way, Jakaitienė maintains her thesis that -din and -in are, for the most part, arbitrary or, at best, lexically conditioned variants of one and the same causative morpheme.12 Her thesis, however, runs counter to Stang's observation, "[i]m Lit[auischen] hat sich der Typus auf -dina von demjenigen auf -ina losgerissen, und eine spezielle Funktion angenommen. Der Typus drückt aus, daß man et[was] durch einen anderen tun läßt..."13 In my opinion, Stang's observation is correct: the suffix -din did indeed "break away" from -in, at least partly. In speaking of -din, one must in fact distinguish between two homophonous suffixes: -din as an alternative to -in, as Jakaitienė proposes, on the one hand; and -din as a passive causative morpheme in its own right, on the other. My opinion is supported by cases like valgyti 'to eat' and valgyndinti 'to feed, dine (someone); have (someone) eat,' cf.:
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(10) válgyti (dúona)
   'to eat (bread)'

(11) valgydinti (vaikūs)
   'to feed (the children)'

Válgyti is obviously a transitive verb. If Jakaitiené's thesis were correct, then the phrase valgydinti vaikūs would have to signify 'to have the children eaten.' The reason valgydinti (kā) does not mean 'to have (something) eaten' is that the d in the suffix is clearly performing its original hiatus-eliminating function and that the suffix is really -in (not the curative -din).

Geniušienė has shown that reflexivization (-si- affixation) in Lithuanian, like reflexivization in the Slavic languages, is best defined as a derivational process involving valence reduction (predicate lowering). Causativity, on the other hand, involves an increase in the valence of a given basic verb (predicate raising). Passivization is also a valence-reducing process, but reflexivization differs from passivization in that passivization (given a basic transitive verb with accusative object governance) consistently entails omitting the Agent of that action and expressing the Patient of that action syntactically as subject rather than object. Reflexivization, in contrast, involves nothing more than valence reduction: the omitted participant (actant), from the viewpoint of the basic verb, may be either an Agent or a Patient. The semantic status of the remaining participant, expressed syntactically as the subject of the reflexive verb, is therefore ambiguous: it may be Agent, Patient, or a combination of the two. The verb derived through reflexivization accordingly expresses intransitive, passive, or reflexive meaning. Because Lithuanian reflexive verbs can govern accusative objects, the subjects of such verbs may also express Agent and Recipient (Beneficiary) simultaneously. "Benefactive" meaning is thereby expressed, cf.:

(12) Ràtas sûkasi. [< sûtì 'to turn (trans.)']
   Intransitive: 'The wheel turns.'

(13) Daûg dûonas susivûgè. [< suválgysti 'to eat']
   Resultative passive: 'Much bread was eaten.'

(14) Jônas skûkas. [< skûsti 'to shave (trans.)']
   Patientive (accusative) reflexive: 'John is shaving (i.e., himself).'

(15) (a) Jônas skûkasi baždo.
   "Benefactive" (dative) reflexive: 'John is shaving his beard.'
   (b) Mûtina sûvasi suknûle. [< sûtì 'to sew']
   "Benefactive" (dative) reflexive: 'Mother is sewing herself a dress.'

As Geniušienė has shown, reflexivization of (derived) causative verbs clearly entails valence reduction, assuming specifically a "decausative" or "anti-causative" function. For example, from the basic transitive ("monovalent") verb sugëstì 'to break (down),' the transitive ("divalent") verb sugadinti 'to break, damage' is formed by means of the causative suffix -in. According to Geniušienė, affixing the reflexive particle -si- to sugadinti reduces the valence of the causative by one actant, thereby producing another "monovalent"
verb—susigadinti—which is virtually synonymous with the basic verb sugéstii, cf.:

(16)(a) Sugédó laikrodis. 'The clock broke.'
   (b) Sugadinaž laikrodi. 'I broke the clock.'
   (i.e., 'I made the clock break."
   (c) Susigadino laikrodis. 'The clock broke.'

If reflexivization of a transitive verb derived through causative suffixation yields an intransitive verb that is synonymous with the basic intransitive verb, one might expect that reflexivization of a curative verb derived through causative suffixation of a basic transitive verb would likewise yield a synonym of the basic verb. This is not the case, however; cf.:

(17) sugéstii → sugadinti → susigadinti = sugéstii 'to break'
(18) pastiitii → pasišdintii → pasišdintii ≠ pastiitii 'to sew'

Reflexive forms of curative verbs, in fact, express only (accusative or dative) "reflexive" meaning, in the traditional sense of the term, cf.:

(19)(a) nusikripdintii 'to have one's hair cut' (cf. [14] above)
   (b) nusikripdinti plaukus 'to have one's hair cut' (cf. [15(a)] above)
   (c) pasistatydintii nāmā (= pastatydintii sau nāmā) 'to have a house built for oneself' (cf. [15(b)] above)

As example (19)(c) and my earlier examples (2)(b) and (d) demonstrate, benefactive meaning can also be expressed (in emphatic or contrastive contexts) by means of the non-reflexive verb form and the dative reflexive pronoun. However, where "accusative reflexive" meaning is expressed, i.e., where the subject of the reflexive verb simultaneously functions as (Indirect) Agent and Patient (rather than as Agent and Recipient), the non-reflexive verb with the accusative reflexive pronoun sau is inadmissible, cf.:

(20) nusikripdaiv sau 'to have one's hair cut'

In contrast, non-curative verbs formed from basic intransitive verbs by means of causative suffi xation exhibit no constraint on the occurrence of the accusative reflexive pronoun, cf.:

(21)(a) gydytii (ligōni) [< gyti 'to convalesce; heal (intrans.)']
   'to treat/heal (a patient)'
   (b) gydytis 'to treat/heal oneself'
   (c) gydytii sau 'to treat/heal oneself'

However, if the verb gydytis (like sīlitis in [1(c)]) is used instead in the curative sense 'to have oneself treated'—i.e., as the equivalent of an unambiguously curative form gydydintis—then the occurrence of the reflexive pronoun sau with the non-reflexive verb form is in fact precluded. Thus, even in the contrastive context The neighbor is having himself and his son treated at the hospital, the reflexive pronoun sau cannot be used, cf.:

(22)(a) *Kaimynas gydo sau ir sānu ligōninēje.

Instead, the verb gydytii must occur twice—once in its reflexive form, and again in its non-reflexive form, cf.:

(22)(b) Kaimynas gydosau ir gydo sānu ligōninēje.
(Literally) "The neighbor is having himself treated and is having his son treated at the hospital."

Interestingly, the same constraint on the occurrence of the reflexive pronoun with what Nedjalkov has called "contextual causatives" (Russian kontekstnye kauzativy) is observable also in the Slavic languages.

Both morphological and syntactic reflexivization of passive causatives thus clearly differs from that of non-passive causatives. As we have seen in the case of gydyti(s), however, non-passive causatives do share with passive causatives the same constraint on the co-occurrence of the reflexive pronoun in those instances where the non-passive causative is apparently re-analyzed as a basic transitive verb that can be used in a passive causative sense. (In other words, the accusative reflexive pronoun cannot be coreferential with a subject expressing the Indirect Agent of an action, regardless whether the subject actually governs a morphologically curative verb or not.)

How do formally non-curative verbs come to be used as curatives? Geniušienė, in discussing the various meanings attributable to the process of reflexivization, mentions the existence of "causative reflexives." These are verbs which, though formally non-causative (non-curative), acquire passive causative meaning in certain contexts. They exist not only in Lithuanian, but in Latvian and the Slavic languages as well, cf.:

(23) Lithuanian: gydytis (pas specialisto); krikštitytis
Latvian: ārstēties (pie specialista); kristīties
Russian: lečit'sja (u specialista); krestit'sja 'to have oneself treated (by a specialist)'; 'to have oneself christened'

As Endzelins has stated, "both in the Baltic and Slavic languages, reflexive forms have developed in place of the original middle forms." Marguliés and Isačenko similarly likened the use of reflexive verb forms in Slavic to the use of middle verb forms in classical Greek. Indeed, Liddell and Scott provide unambiguously causative definitions for numerous middle verb forms, among them διδάσκεσθαι 'to get oneself baptized,' δικαστεσθαι 'to have (another) taught,' δικαίους έκτετα 'to have one's case tried.' As Benveniste has noted, the original voice opposition in Greek was active vs. middle, with special forms for the passive (in the future and aorist tenses only) eventually evolving from the middle. This suggests that the subject of an active verb form was semantically marked for Direct Agency, while the subject of a middle (or rather, "non-active") verb form was not so marked. Thus, the subject of such verbs could function as Agent, as Patient, and as Agent and Patient or Recipient simultaneously—just as the subjects of the Lithuanian reflexive verbs cited in examples (12)-(15). One should not, however, overlook the fact that the concept of Agency (or "Agentivity") is itself ambiguous: Agency may be Direct or Indirect. Agents are called Indirect if they "indirectly," i.e., through the medium of another (Direct) Agent, perform a particular action. That is to say, they cause a particular action to be performed. In view of the fact that the subjects of Lithuanian reflexive verbs are semantically ambiguous in ways strikingly similar to those in which the subjects of Greek middle verbs are, I propose that the curative
meaning which these verbs may express is due to the ability of their subjects to function as Indirect Agents. For this reason, non-curative verb forms can frequently be used to convey curative meaning.

Unfortunately, the foregoing observations do not adequately explain the use of non-reflexive, non-curative verb forms like (pa)sitūi kostiūma (pās siuvēja, atelējē) in example (1)(d). Given the fact that the accusative reflexive pronoun cannot be used with formally non-curative verbs used in curative contexts, I hypothesize that the use of non-reflexive verbs was originally patterned after the curative use of reflexive verbs. That is to say, if gydytis can signify ‘to have oneself treated,’ i.e., if it can express reflexive curativity, then the use of gydyti for the expression of non-reflexive curativity (‘to have [someone] treated’) would seem to be a logical syntactico-semantic development. If this analysis is correct, then the inadmissibility of *gydyti savė in the sense ‘to have oneself treated’ may be explained by stating that gydytis, being primary, already sufficed for the expression of reflexive curative meaning.

With regard to curative -din- suffixed verbs, Stang states: ‘Derartige passive Kausativa’ können zu allen möglichen Verba gebildet werden.’37 Indeed, F. Kurschat’s Litauisch-deutsches Wörterbuch lists -din- suffixed passive and non-passive causative forms for practically every one of its transitive and intransitive verb entries.38 A. Kurschat, in his posthumously published four-volume Litauisch-deutsches Wörterbuch, followed for the most part his uncle’s example.39 These observations suggest that curative verb formation by means of -din- suffixation is a sufficiently productive derivational process to make the expression of curative meaning by way of non-curative verb forms in Lithuanian rather superfluous. By this I mean that it seems somewhat incongruous that one might ambiguously state Jōnas siūvasi kosliūlį (literally) ‘John is sewing himself a suit,’ when what one actually means is Jōnas siūdinasi kosliūlį ‘John is having a suit sewn for himself.’ Indeed, Senn’s Handbuch der litauischen Sprache even hints that “contextual causativity” (i.e., the use of non-curative verb forms in a curative sense) is a Slavic influence. Among the German translations of the Lithuanian preposition pās, Senn cites the German gloss von and precedes this with the word “Slavismus” in parentheses.40 Actually, Lithuanian pās corresponds almost exactly to the Russian (Polish, Czech, Slovak) preposition u (German bei, French chez). In the Slavic languages, however, this preposition is also used to convey the Direct Agent of a contextually implied caused action.41 Thus, the causative (curative) situation denoted by ‘The neighbor is having his son treated by the doctor’ is expressed in Russian as Sosed lečit syna u vrača. The literal Lithuanian translation of the Russian conveys exactly the same curative meaning. It is only in such contexts, then, that Lithuanian pās could ever be functionally equivalent to German von, cf.:

(24) Kaimynas gydo sūnų pās gydytoja.
‘Der Nachbar läßt den Sohn vom Arzt behandeln.’

In actual fact, however, curative verb formation through -din- suffixation is not as productive as non-native Lithuanian scholars have, it would seem, previously assumed. In response to queries regarding curative verbs—specifically,
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gydydinti 'to have (someone) treated' (< gydyti 'to treat, heal') and (nufotografuodinti 'to have (someone) photographed' (< fotografuoti 'to photograph')—one informant stated: "Most of them are theoretically imaginable but sound extremely artificial and are never used in any living Lithuanian dialect ... [including] standard Lithuanian." In view of the numerous curative forms cited in F. Kurschat's Wörterbuch, however, this same informant conceded that "there is a possibility that such forms were used in the Lithuanian dialect of East Prussia (which died out in the 19th century)." Nevertheless, as early as 1913, Jablonskis, in reviewing K. Jaunius's Lietuvos kalbos gramatika (sic; St. Petersburg, 1911), agreed with the author that F. Kurschat's causatives (curatives?) bégdinu 'laufen lassen,' gvyédinu 'wohnen lassen,' stōvedinu 'stehen lassen,' "practically speaking, can in no way exist in a living dialect [žmonių kalboje 'human language']." Unfortunately, the twenty-volume Lithuanian Academy Dictionary is unreliable on this score, since numerous -din-suffixed verb entries appear to have been copied directly from F. Kurschat's Wörterbuch, and their usage, unlike that of the Academy Dictionary's other verb entries, is not illustrated by any attested literary source.

In sum, morphological and contextual causativity in Lithuanian, as far as I have been able to determine, remains an unsolved problem, on which my foregoing notes, I would hope, have nevertheless shed some additional light.

ENDNOTES


4. I use the term "reflexive verb" in its "traditional sense" (as also, for example, Alexander M. Schenker, "W sprawie się raz jeszcze," Język Polski 65 (1985):1, 9-23), although the term "-si-affixed verb" is doubtless more accurate. In this respect I depart here from my preference for the term "-sja-suffixed" with respect to Russian verbs (see Gary H. Toops, Grammatical Causativity in Slavic [Ph.D. dissertation: Yale University, 1985]).


7. See Emma Geniušienė [E. S. Genjišene], "K teorii opisanija reflexivnyx
glagolov (na materiale litovskogo jazyka)" in V. S. Xrakovskij, ed.,
Zalogovye konstrukcii v raznostrukturnyx jazykax (Leningrad: Nauka, 1981),
176-177.


According to Stang, loc. cit., the d has retained its original hiatus-eliminating
function in Latvian.

10. One should not overlook the fact that in addition to the suffixes -in
(lipinti) and -din (lipdinti), the suffixes -y (lipyti) and -dy (lipdyti) may
likewise occur with the same function as -in and -din (the meaning of all
four verbs is identical).

11. Jakaitienė, "Dėl...piresagų," 175.

12. Ibid.

13. Christian S. Stang, Das slavische und baltische Verbum (Skifter utgitt av det
Stang quotes here K. Brugmann, Grundriß der vergleichenden Grammatik
der indogermanischen Sprachen (Strasbourg, 1897-1916), II:3 §233.

14. There are several other cursory, but nonetheless compelling, observations
which support the proposition that curative and non-curative -din are actually
two distinct, albeit homophonous, suffixes. First, as Otrębski, Gramatyka,
412, points out, the curative suffix -din hardly ever alters the accentuation
of the basic (non-suffixed transitive) verb (although, ironically, Otrębski, in
providing examples of a few exceptions to this general rule, erroneously
cites the non-curative verb valgydinti ). Second, curative verbs are almost
exclusively formed by means of -din-suffixation; this is not the case with
other causative verbs (see note 10). In my admittedly limited research, I
have encountered only two curative verbs that do not have the suffix -din:
siūdyti (kš) ‘to have (something) sewn’ (see Lietuvos TSR Mokslų
Akademija. Lietuvių kalbos ir literatūros institutas, Lietuvių kalbos žodynas
[Vilnius: Mokslas, 1981], XII, 590) and kiūpinti (s) ‘to have (something/one’s
hair) cut’ (see Lietuvos TSR Mokslų Akademija. Lietuvių kalbos ir
literatūros institutas, Lietuvių kalbos žodynas [Vilnius: Valstybinė Politinės
ir Mokslenės Literatūros Leidykla, 1959], V, 849). However, siūdinti and
kiūpedinti (s) also exist, and the fact that the stressed syllables of the former
verbs are identical to those of the basic verbs siūti ‘to sew’ and kiūpiti ‘to
cut’ cannot be ignored. Finally, curative verbs can be formed from almost
any transitive verb by means of the suffix -din; this does not hold true for
other suffixes. According to one informant (Tomas Venclova, Yale
University, personal communication), newly formed curative verbs are
technically "acceptable," although they may strike the native speaker of
Lithuanian as being "artificial."
16. This description of passivization is, of course, slightly simplified. In Lithuanian, objectless intransitive verbs can also be passivized. This results in impersonal passive constructions where the Agent of the original non-passive verb, if expressed, occurs in the genitive case, in the same way as Agents are "re-introduced" into passive constructions from which they have originally been eliminated (see Toops, Grammatical Causativity in Slavic). Thus, Ką čia buvo? 'Who was here?' can be passivized: Kieno čia buvo? (literally) *'By whom is been here?' (sic). German has similar impersonal passives (Hier wurde viel getanzt [literally] *'Here was [being] danced a lot'). In German passive constructions, moreover, the Patient of an action does not govern the verb as subject if the "original" active verb form has dative object governance. Thus, passivization of Er hat mir geholfen 'He helped me' results in Mir ist (von ihm) geholfen worden 'I was helped (by him),' not *Ich bin (von ihm) geholfen worden.  
17. The term "resultative passive" is taken here from Geniušienė, "Die Reflexivverben," 665.  
18. Geniušienė, "Die Reflexivverben," 660-661, classifies such verbs as "possessive Patiensreflexiva" and distinguishes them from the benefactive reflexives ("Rezipientenreflexiva"). I group the two together here partly for convenience and partly because similar dative reflexive constructions perform both functions in other languages, cf. French and German: se faire la barbe, sich den Bart rasieren; se faire une robe, sich ein Kleid machen.  
23. Geniušienė, "Die Reflexivverben," 657; Karl Horst Schmidt, "Zur Syntax des Kausativums im Georgischen und in indogermanischen Sprachen," Bedi Kartlisa 21/22 (1966), 121-127, speaks in terms of "one-, two-membered sentences" (ein-, zweigliedrige Sätze). His calculation of "members" is equivalent to Tesnière's valence + 1 (i.e., number of actants + verb).  
24. Admittedly, one could also imagine a context in which a reflexive passive causative is used in a "resultative passive" sense (see note 17): Daug suknėlių pasistūdino, meaning something like 'A lot of dresses were ordered (and "gotten") sewn.'  
25. Lietuvių kalbos žodynas, XII, 1149.  
26. Lietuvių kalbos žodynas, V, 848.

28. Actually, a truly literal translation would be 'The neighbor is treating himself and is treating (his) son at the hospital.'


42. Tomas Venclova (Yale University, personal communication).


44. Consider, for example, *skaršmaliuoti* in *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* ("Lithuanian Academy Dictionary"), XII, 759. This verb is apparently taken directly from F. Kurschat's *Litauisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*, 378, where it is defined as "lumpig einhergehen lassen" ('to let [someone] go about [looking] ragged'). Even though the Lithuanian Academy Dictionary cites the basic verb as *skarmalioti* (F. Kurschat, *Litauisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*, 378, cites *skarmaščit* 'mit Lumpen bekleidet schnell gehen, gehen, daß die Lumpen fliegen' ['to walk fast while dressed in rags; to walk so fast that the rags fly'], it does not provide a corresponding *-din*-suffixed verb form with the expected accent, viz. *skarmaliuodinti* (see, however, A. Kurschat, *Litauisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*, 2173).