

# Lithuanian reflexive-based impersonals with accusative objects

**Birutė Spraunienė**

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

**Vaiva Žeimantienė**

Vilnius University, Vilnius, Lithuania

**Summary.** This paper surveys Lithuanian impersonal constructions with predicative present passive participles containing non-promoted accusative objects. It is shown that the construction, hitherto considered very rare, is well-attested and productive with one verb class, namely, transitive reflexives. In terms of semantics, transitive reflexives in Lithuanian may be classified as autobenefactives. Autobenefactive reflexives do not exhibit a change in argument structure with respect to their non-reflexive counterparts. In the case of autobenefactives, the morpheme *-si-* attached to the verb adds the meaning that the subject, which mostly has the semantic role of an agent, benefits from the event expressed by the predicate. On the basis of corpus data, we have analysed how widespread impersonal constructions with accusative objects are within the domain of transitive reflexives and which pattern—the accusative or the nominative—is dominant when both are attested. Lastly, we briefly discuss the temporal-aspectual meaning of reflexive-based impersonals as well as the referential properties of implied agents.

**Keywords:** impersonal constructions, non-promoting passives, reflexives, autobenefactives, Lithuanian

## 1 Introduction

This article surveys Lithuanian constructions containing a predicative passive participle with a non-promoted accusative object. An example of such a construction is given in (1). For comparison, a canonical promoting passive is exemplified in (2).

- (1) *Renka-m-a-si*            *ne geriausia,*        *o pigiausia*  
choose-PRS.PP-NA-RFL not best.ACC.SG.M but cheapest.ACC.SG.M  
*variantą.* (ItTenTen14)  
alternative(M).ACC.SG  
‘Not the best, but the cheapest alternative is being chosen.’

- (2) *Šiais metais buvo*    *pa-si-rink-t-as*                            *Žemaitijos*  
this\_year be.PST3 PVB-RFL-choose-PST.PP-SG.M    PLN.GEN  
*regionas.* (ItTenTen14)  
region.NOM.SG  
‘This year the region of Samogitia was chosen.’

Constructions illustrated in (1) and (2) differ in several respects:

- agent demotion in (2) is followed by object promotion which is not the case in (1). The promoted object in (2) functions as a canonical subject and agrees with the passive participle in number, gender and case, whereas in (1) the direct object retains the accusative case marking, and the passive participle occurs with the neuter ending *-a*, which is the default form used in the absence of a proper controller of verbal agreement in a clause. In the following we will refer to the ending *-a* as ‘the non-agreeing form’;
- the demoted agent may be expressed as an oblique genitive-marked agent phrase<sup>1</sup> in (2), but not in (1) (cf. Ambrazas et al. 2006, 661);
- (1) is limited to indefinite or generic human agency (cf. Geniušienė 2016, 123), whereas in (2) no restrictions on the semantics of the demoted agent are imposed;

1 This restriction though may reflect the general reluctance of subjectless and subject-weak *m*-passives to accept agent phrases, see Nau, Spraunienė & Žeimantienė (2020, 87–95).

- in (1) present passive participles are almost exclusively used, whereas in (2) both present and past passive participles are possible.

Because of these formal and semantic differences we would categorize (1) as a ‘(subject) impersonal construction’ distinct from the canonical agreeing passive. We use the term “impersonal” in the sense of ‘lacking an (overt or covert) syntactic subject’ (cf. Malchukov & Siewierska 2011, 2). We prefer not to use the term “impersonal passive” because, as shown in Nau, Spraunienė & Žeimantienė (2020), what is traditionally subsumed under the category of “impersonal passive” in Lithuanian (which is roughly defined as any construction with a non-agreeing passive participial form) is indeed a cluster of structurally and semantically different constructions, including generic descriptions, the cumulative-retrospective construction, the evidential construction, the impersonal construction etc. A different approach to passives and impersonals is advocated in Blevins (2003). Blevins argues for a strict division between passives and impersonals, treating them as two different types of verbal diathesis. According to Blevins’ approach, the agent in an impersonal is not demoted but merely suppressed, which means that its overt expression is inhibited. An impersonal thus contains a covert agent-subject which is syntactically active. Kibort (2006) shows that the existence of such covert subjects in Polish *-no/-to* constructions can be proved by applying syntactic tests for subjecthood. However, in Lithuanian, the usual syntactic tests for subject status work well with canonical subjects, but they do not give reliable results in the case of putative covert subjects (for details see Spraunienė, Razanovaitė & Jasionytė 2015). As the existence of impersonals in Lithuanian (in Blevins’ sense) cannot be verified in a way independent of the theory, we prefer treating the construction exemplified in (1) as a member of the “Passive Family” alongside with other predicative uses of passive participles (see Nau, Spraunienė & Žeimantienė 2020). Thus, in our view, Example (1) represents a subtype of subjectless passives where the agent has been demoted from the subject position but the transitive object retains its syntactic status and case form.

Although the earliest attestation of a Lithuanian impersonal with an accusative object is probably from as long ago as 1573, in the manuscript of the evangelical *Postilė* of Wolfenbüttel<sup>2</sup>, see example (3), it is reported in the liter-

2 This is the first Lithuanian manuscript collection of sermons. The sermons were mostly translated from Latin and German, with some original fragments. The translator/compiler is unknown.

ature that this construction is very rare (cf. LKG 1971, II, 53; Geniušienė 2006; Geniušienė 2016, 121–122; Spraunienė, Razanovaitė & Jasionytė 2015):

Old Lithuanian

- (3) *tikrų kūnų* [...], *tikrų kraughį ira*  
 true.ACC.SG body.ACC.SG true.ACC.SG blood.ACC.SG be.PRS3  
*walgama ir gerama* (cited from Danylenko 2005, 156, our glossing)  
 eat.PRS.PP.NA and drink.PRS.PP.NA  
 ‘true body [...], true blood are being eaten and drunk’

In Holvoet (2001, 376–377) the retention of the accusative object instead of promoting it to subject is viewed as “a natural shift from a passive towards an impersonal construction”, i.e. as an independent development in Lithuanian which is considered a typological parallel to the development of Polish *-no/-to* impersonals. Danylenko (2005, 158), however, argues that the emergence of the accusative object in the impersonal environment did not occur as a “natural shift”, but that it should be attributed to “the Polish adstratum interference throughout the East Lithuanian territory”. Interestingly, the use of neuter passive participles with accusative-marked objects was “conspicuously widespread” in Lithuanian press in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Danylenko 2005, 152). However, such constructions were regarded as calques from Polish and were subsequently banned from the emerging standard language. The famous Lithuanian language reformer Jonas Jablonskis started to correct them, replacing the accusative with the nominative, which he considered indigenous (ibid.). Consequently, Jablonskis’ famous grammar from 1922 does not contain a single example of an impersonal construction with an accusative object (ibid.). Thus, sporadic occurrence of impersonals with accusative objects in modern standard Lithuanian may be seen as a result of the efficient purification of the Lithuanian language in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (though they are by no means considered ill-formed in present day grammars of Lithuanian).

Nau, Spraunienė and Žeimantienė (2020) have discovered that the impersonal construction with an accusative object occurs far more frequently with one particular verb class, namely, unprefixated reflexive verbs<sup>3</sup>, such as *rinktis*

3 By the term ‘reflexive’ we mean any verb containing the reflexive marker *-si-* or its allomorph *-s* irrespective of the meaning of the verb. For details see sec. 2.

‘choose (for oneself)’ in (1). These verbs are morphologically defective in that they may only form non-agreeing passive participles, the agreeing form being blocked by the verb-final reflexive marker. In spite of this, they may also be used in promoting passives, for example:

- (4) *Aiškina-m-a-si*                    *jy*                    *asmenybė*. (DLKT)  
 find\_out-PRS.PP-NA-RFL 3PL.POSS identity(F).NOM.SG  
 ‘Their identity is being investigated.’

In (4) the initial object appears in the nominative case, which shows that it has been promoted to subject position. Verbal agreement is not mandatory for subjectful passives in Lithuanian. On the basis of corpus data, Nau, Spraunienė and Žeimantienė (2020, 59–62) investigate the use of two reflexive verbs in impersonal constructions, namely, *rinktis* ‘choose (for oneself)’ and *aiškintis* ‘find out (for oneself)’. The investigation shows that these verbs behave very differently with respect to the retention of an accusative object in an impersonal construction: with *rinktis* the accusative marking is nearly as frequent as the nominative (48.1% and 51.9%, respectively), whereas with *aiškintis* nominative subjects prevail, non-promoted accusative objects constituting only 5.1% of the data. On the basis of their investigation Nau, Spraunienė and Žeimantienė (2020, 61) draw a tentative conclusion that impersonals with accusative objects are spreading within the domain of reflexive verbs. This fact has not been noticed in the literature on the Lithuanian passive before. Neither Geniušienė’s most extensive investigation of the Lithuanian passive (1973, the English edition Geniušienė 2016), nor her subsequent monograph on reflexives (1987) mention that impersonal (passive) forms of reflexive verbs should have a predisposition to retaining accusative objects. Nau, Spraunienė and Žeimantienė (2020, 61) admit that more research is required in order to identify factors that determine the use of accusative *versus* nominative in such constructions. The present article is intended to fill in this gap. On the basis of what has been said, we have formulated the following research questions:

- i) How widespread are reflexive-based impersonals with accusative objects? (i.e. Do they extend to other lexemes beyond *rinktis* and *aiškintis*?)
- ii) Which (semantic and formal) classes of reflexives are used in impersonals with accusative objects?

iii) What semantic and formal features are characteristic of reflexive-based impersonals?

Our investigation was carried out in the spirit of ‘the corpus-driven approach’ (Tognini-Bonelli 2001). All our observations are based on corpus evidence. Self-constructed examples are only used in the paper to give a textbook example or to illustrate a difference between two forms in a simplified manner. Our empirical material mainly comes from two sources: The Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian<sup>4</sup> and the web corpus ltTenTen14<sup>5</sup>. In certain cases, a Google search was done in order to complement the corpus data. We have gathered 464 examples of reflexive-based impersonals with accusative objects (with present passive participles). For details on the methods of data collection and processing see section 3. The cited Lithuanian examples are glossed in accordance with the Salos Glossing Rules (Nau & Arkadiev 2015), avoiding unnecessary segmentation. The rest of the article is structured as follows: section 2 contains a short description of reflexives in Lithuanian mainly focusing on the types of transitive reflexives, in section 3 the method for gathering and the structure of the data are presented, section 4 includes an analysis of the data with respect to the research questions. In section 5 we summarize the main findings and present concluding remarks.

## 2 Reflexives in Lithuanian

Reflexives in Lithuanian are traditionally<sup>6</sup> considered derivatives which are formed by adding the reflexive marker *-si-* (or its allomorph *-s*) to a non-reflexive base verb (Geniušienė 1987, 356)<sup>7</sup>, e.g. the intransitive verb *registruotis* ‘register oneself’ is derived from the transitive verb *registruoti* ‘register’, see examples (5–6).

4 Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos tekstynas (DLKT), appr. 208 million words, available at <http://corpus.vdu.lt/lt/>.

5 Lithuanian Web 2014, appr. 778 million words, available at <https://www.sketchengine.eu/>.

6 As pointed out by Holvoet (2016, 456), the treatment of the reflexive marker as a derivational affix was borrowed from Russian grammar of the Soviet period—in grammars of the pre-Soviet period the reflexive marker was recognized as an inflexional affix and the notion of “middle voice” was employed.

7 However, some reflexive verbs, the so-called *reflexiva tantum*, do not have non-reflexive counterparts, e.g. *džiaugtis* ‘rejoice’, *juoktis* ‘laugh’. Verbs denoting change in body posture such as *gulti/gultis* ‘lay down’, *sėsti/sėstis* ‘sit down’ convey the same lexical meaning with and without the reflexive marker (Junčytė 2016, 59).

- (5) *Mugėje*                    *registravo-si*            416 *lietuvių*. (ItTenTen14)  
 exhibition.LOC.SG    register.PST3-RFL 416 Lithuanian.GEN.PL  
 ‘416 Lithuanians (have) registered for the exhibition.’
- (6) *Dalyvauti*            *prezidento*            *rinkimuose*  
 participate.INF    president.GEN.SG    election.LOC.PL  
*VRK*                                    *registravo*            *septynis*  
 national\_election\_commission    register.PST3    seven.ACC.PL.M  
*kandidatus*. (ItTenTen14)  
 candidate.ACC.PL  
 ‘The National Election Commission (have) registered seven candidates  
 for the presidential election.’

The reflexive marker *-si-* is of pronominal origin; it evolved from an enclitic reflexive pronoun which had lost its ability to occupy the position of a syntactic argument (Holvoet 2020, 11). Although the reflexive marker *-si-* in Lithuanian has developed various extended uses, including the “potential passive” (or “facilitative”) use (Geniušienė 1987; Holvoet 2020, 145f), it is never used to express the passive as in Russian and Scandinavian languages. Constructions with reflexive verbs comprise a heterogeneous set in terms of meaning, productivity and formal properties: while some are clearly lexicalized and belong to the lexicon, others are highly productive and have developed grammatical functions pertaining to the domain of voice<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, the marker *-si-* may be regarded as a borderline case between inflection and derivation.

There are still traces of the enclitic origin of the reflexive marker in Lithuanian: it may change its position in the verbal stem. If a reflexive verb contains no prefix, the reflexive marker *-si-* occurs verb finally, as in (5). In reflexive verbs with prefixes, including the verbal negator *ne-*, the reflexive marker *-si-* moves to the position between the prefix(-es) and the root, cf. (7). This behaviour shows that *-si-* is not yet fully grammaticalized as an affix<sup>9</sup>.

8 Holvoet (2020) uses the term ‘middle voice’ as a cover term for the grammatical uses of reflexives. There are different types and subtypes of middles in Lithuanian: anticausative, deobjective, facilitative, etc.

9 Haspelmath (2011) suggests that the Lithuanian *-si-* could be considered as a clitic. Korostenskiene (2017) arrives at the same conclusion on the basis of a detailed analysis within the

- (7) [*Ir man pasisekė, radau komentarus apie puikią, nuostabią dietologę,*  
*už-si-registravau konsultacijai ir laukiau.* (ItTenTen14)  
 PVB-RFL-register.PST1 consultation.DAT.SG and wait.PST1  
 ‘[And I was lucky to find comments about a nice, wonderful  
 dietitian,] I registered for a consultation and waited.’

Prefixes or, more specifically, lexical preverbs<sup>10</sup>, in many cases contribute to the perfective<sup>11</sup> meaning of the verbal lexeme, e.g. *užsiregistravau* in (7) refers to a completed event in the past. It has to be noted that from the derivational point of view, the prefixed reflexives may be of two types:

- i) prefixed reflexives that are formed from unprefixes reflexives, e.g., *pasikviesti* ‘invite’ ← *kviestis* + *pa-*.
- ii) reflexives with lexicalized prefixes which do not have unprefixes counterparts<sup>12</sup> and therefore can only be analysed as reflexive derivatives of non-reflexive prefixed verbs, e.g., *įsigyti* ‘acquire’ ← *įgyti* + *-si-*.

Importantly, the *ma-*forms of prefixed reflexives are not morphologically defective—they can form agreeing passive constructions (see examples (19–20)).

As most reflexives exhibit a valence decrease with respect to the non-reflexive base verb (this is illustrated by the example pair (5–6)), the majority of reflexives are intransitive. Depending on which argument, direct object, subject or indirect (dative) object, is deleted as a result of valence decrease in reflexive formation, three major syntactic classes of reflexives are distinguished: subjective (e.g. *Durys atsidarė* ‘The door opened’), objective (e.g. *Šuo kandžiojasi* ‘The dog bites’) and transitive (dative) reflexives (Geniušienė 1987). Only the latter class will be discussed in detail in the present paper as it may serve as input for impersonals with accusative objects.

**Dative transitive reflexives** constitute the second largest syntactic class of Lithuanian reflexives. They comprise 28.5% of all reflexive verbs in a list

generative framework. For a detailed discussion about the status of the reflexive marker see also Holvoet (2016, 456–460).

10 For a classification of Lithuanian prefixes see, for example, Arkadiev 2014.

11 It has to be noted though that the category of aspect is less grammaticalized in Lithuanian than, for example, in Russian, and not all pairs of unprefixes and prefixed verbs express an aspectual opposition.

12 Cf. LKG 1971, 2 t., 20.

of reflexives, compiled by Geniušienė, which consists of 3,680 lexemes (the figures are derived from Geniušienė 1987, 73, Table 2). According to Geniušienė (ibid., 129–133), dative transitive reflexives derive from bivalent non-reflexive verbs with an optional indirect object of Possessor or Beneficiary. A subset of dative transitive reflexives derives from trivalent non-reflexive base verbs with an obligatory indirect object of Recipient. Geniušienė distinguishes between three semantic types of dative transitive reflexives:

- a) reflexive-possessive,
- b) reflexive-benefactive,
- c) reflexive-recipient.

**Reflexive-possessive** transitive reflexives express taking care of one's body or clothes, injuring or affecting one's body parts, clothes, etc. Here are some examples: *valytis (dantis)* 'brush (one's teeth)', *prauštis, šluostytis (veidą, rankas)* 'wash, dry (one's face, hands)', *įsipjauti (pirštą)* 'cut (one's finger)', cf.:

- (8) *Ona nu-šluostė vaikui veidą.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-dry.PST3 child.DAT.SG face.ACC.SG  
 'Ona dried the child's face.'

- (9) *Ona nu-si-šluostė veidą.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-RFL-dry.PST3 face.ACC.SG  
 'Ona dried her face.'

In the non-reflexive base verb (8) the referent of the direct object stands in an inalienable (or quasi-inalienable) possession relation to the human referent of the indirect object. In the reflexive verb (9) the inalienable possession relation is established between the Agent and his/her body part (Geniušienė 1987, 130).

**Reflexive-benefactive** transitive reflexives are labelled so because the subject of the reflexive verb is both an agent and a beneficiary of the event expressed by the verb (ibid., 131), for example:

- (10) *Petras nu-pirko sūnui automobilį.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-buy.PST3 son.DAT.SG car.ACC.SG  
 'Petras (has) bought a car for his son.'

- (11) *Petras nu-si-pirko automobilį.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-RFL-buy.PST3 car.ACC.SG  
 ‘Petras (has) bought a car (for himself).’

**Reflexive-recipient** transitive reflexives constitute a small set of verbs denoting putting on and taking off clothes, shoes, etc. The subject of the reflexive is both the agent and the recipient of the predicated situation. An example pair is given in (12–13):

- (12) *Ona už-movė vaikui pirštines.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-put\_on.PST3 child.DAT.SG mitten.ACC.PL  
 ‘Ona put the child’s mittens on for him.’

- (13) *Ona už-si-movė pirštines.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-RFL-put\_on.PST3 mitten.ACC.PL  
 ‘Ona put on her mittens.’

Geniušienė (ibid., 134–135) also mentions several cases of **non-dative transitive reflexives**. These reflexives exhibit no valence change with respect to the non-reflexive base verb. The reflexive marker may be added to a trivalent non-reflexive base verb without deletion of the dative object which plays the semantic role of a recipient, e.g.:

- (14) *Jis niekam savo bėdų*  
 3.NOM.SG.M nobody.DAT.SG RPOSS trouble.GEN.PL  
*ne-pasakoja.* (Geniušienė 1987, 134, our glossing)  
 NEG-tell.PRS3  
 ‘He does not tell anybody of his troubles.’

- (15) *Jis niekam savo bėdų*  
 3.NOM.SG.M nobody.DAT.SG RPOSS trouble.GEN.PL  
*ne-si-pasakoja.* (Geniušienė 1987, 134, our glossing)  
 NEG-RFL-tell.PRS3  
 ‘He does not tell anybody of his troubles.’ (‘He does not unburden himself to anybody.’)

There is a subtle meaning difference between (14) and (15): the reflexive variant of the verb refers to a person's need to release the emotional burden by telling about it to someone. Thus the subject-agent of (15) is also a beneficiary of the event predicated by the verb. In other cases the reflexive marker is added to a non-reflexive base verb which may not have an optional indirect object at all. Consider examples (16) and (17):

(16) *Jonas at-vedė vaiką į*  
 PN.NOM PVB-bring.PST3 child.ACC.SG to  
*mokyklą.* (Geniušienė 1987, 135)  
 school.ACC.SG  
 'Jonas (has) brought the child to school.'

(17) *Jonas at-si-vedė vaiką į*  
 PN.NOM PVB-RFL-bring.PST3 child.ACC.SG to  
*mokyklą.* (Geniušienė 1987, 135)  
 school.ACC.SG  
 'Jonas (has) brought the child with him to school.'

The meaning difference between (16) and (17) is similar to the difference between the previous example pair. In (16) Jonas brings the child to the school which the child attends (i.e. he does it for the sake of the child), while in (17) Jonas has an interest in or benefits from bringing the child to school (maybe because he works there and does not have a babysitter).

Holvoet (2020, 15–23) argues that both dative and non-dative transitive reflexives can be subsumed under a broader semantic category of '**autobenefactives**'. He draws attention to the fact that the autobenefactive marker *-si-* largely corresponds to 'free datives' (i.e. datives of interest or datives of external possession) but that it never corresponds to an argument of the verb, e.g. the recipient argument of 'give' and 'tell' cannot be represented by the reflexive marker (ibid., 19). Holvoet states that the autobenefactive marker *-si-* is therefore not a morphological means of marking the "coreferentiality of two valency positions of the verb" (ibid., 20). The autobenefactive *-si-* does not change the argument structure of the non-reflexive base verb. In this way there is basically no syntactic difference between what Geniušienė calls 'dative' and 'non-dative' transitive reflexives. Both groups share the autobenefactive meaning: that the

subject, which usually plays the semantic role of an agent, has an interest in or in some way benefits from the event expressed by the reflexive verb. Korosten-skiene (2017, 461) also states that when *-si-* is added without valency reduction, it “adds the meaning of the subject performing an action for their own benefit”, e.g. *pasivaikščioti* ‘go for a walk’, *pasiskaityti* ‘read (for oneself)’ are autobenefactives with respect to their non-reflexive counterparts *pavaikščioti* ‘walk for a while’, *paskaityti* ‘read for a while’. In some autobenefactives the subject is affected by the event in a negative way:

- (18) *Ona su-si-laužė koją.*  
 PN.NOM PVB-RFL-break.PST3 leg.ACC.SG  
 ‘Ona broke her leg.’

Autobenefactive reflexives are very productive in Lithuanian; however, not all of them are included in dictionaries. Apparently, the autobenefactive marker *-si-* may be added to most transitive verbs, especially if they have a perfectivizing preverb as in (7).

### 3 Data and method

As stated by Geniušienė (2006, 39), Lithuanian allows forming present and past passive participles of nearly all verbs, including reflexives of some classes. In order to investigate the possible spread of (subject) impersonals with accusative objects into the domain of reflexives, we needed a list of transitive reflexives. As impersonals are basically restricted to the present passive participle, our focus was on the non-agreeing forms of the present passive participle (the so-called *ma*-forms). We adopted the following procedure: first, using the formula *Vgpp--npnn-y-p*, a search for *ma*-forms of reflexive verbs was carried out in the (automatically) morphologically annotated Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian<sup>13</sup>. The search yielded 42,170 occurrences of 963 lexemes<sup>14</sup>. Of these, 150 were identified as transitive reflexive lexemes, see Table 1 below.

13 <http://corpus.vdu.lt/>.

14 It has to be mentioned that although we searched for non-agreeing forms of present passive participles, the sample also included many agreeing canonical passives, as the agreeing feminine (nominative) singular passive form and the non-agreeing passive form are homographs, see example pair (19–20).

Total number of reflexive lexemes in the sample	Number of transitive reflexive lexemes	Number of intransitive reflexive lexemes
963 (100%)	<b>150 (15.6%)</b>	813 (84.4%)

TABLE 1. The proportion of transitive vs. intransitive reflexives used in *ma*-passives in DLKT

As shown in Table 1, transitive reflexives constitute 15.6% of all reflexive lexemes occurring in the *ma*-passive in DLKT. The obtained sample of 150 transitive reflexives was then manually searched through for uses with accusative objects. In order to get more data, we also checked the *ma*-passives of each transitive reflexive in the sample in the web corpus ltTenTen14. The latter corpus is not morphologically annotated, so a search for morphological forms the same way as it was done in DLKT was not possible. We chose ltTenTen14 because it is the largest Lithuanian corpus available (it is more than twice as big as DLKT); in addition, it is compiled from internet texts which are less strictly edited and therefore more likely to reflect a spreading innovation. The results of the search are presented in Table 2.

Transitive reflexive lexemes used in <i>ma</i> -passives with an accusative object	Transitive reflexive lexemes used in <i>ma</i> -passives without an accusative object	Total
<b>45 (30%)</b>	105 (70%)	150 (100%)

TABLE 2. Transitive reflexive lexemes having at least a single attested case of impersonals with accusative objects in DLKT and ltTenTen14

As is evident from Table 2, only 30% of transitive reflexives in our sample had at least a single occurrence in an impersonal construction with a non-promoted accusative object. On the basis of the data, we can assume that impersonals have indeed spread into the domain of transitive reflexives but that this spread has not encompassed all transitive reflexives yet.

#### 4 Analysis

In this section we will examine more closely which reflexives (the prefixed or the unprefixed ones) are more likely to occur in impersonals with accusative objects and which pattern (the accusative or the nominative one) is dominant

when both are attested. We will also give a short description of the reflexive-based impersonal construction in terms of formal and semantic properties (word order, semantics of the demoted agent, temporal-aspectual characteristics etc.).

#### 4.1 Prefixed vs. unprefixed reflexives

We found that some transitive reflexives were more likely to occur in impersonals than others. In the following we list 18 reflexives out of 45 which had only one attested case of an impersonal with an accusative object (either in DLKT or in ItTenTen14): *atsivežti* ‘bring with oneself’, *gydytis* ‘receive treatment’, *įsiminti* ‘remember’, *įsirengti* ‘furnish (one’s flat etc.)’, *klotis* ‘build (foundation)<sup>15</sup>’, *neštis* ‘carry (with oneself)’, *nusiplauti* ‘wash (e.g. one’s hands)’, *pasidaryti* ‘make (for oneself)’, *pasigaminti* ‘produce (for oneself)’, *pasikviesti* ‘invite (to one’s place)’, *savintis* ‘make one’s property’, *statytis* ‘build (for oneself)’, *susižaloti* ‘get wounded’, *susižeisti* ‘get wounded’, *telktis* (į pagalbą) ‘resort (to the aid of)’, *tvarkytis* ‘tidy up (one’s room etc.)’, *užsivilkti* ‘put on’, *vaizduotis* ‘imagine’. The remaining 27 reflexives were used in an impersonal with an accusative object more than once (in both corpora). The results are presented in Table 3.

No.	Verbal lexeme	<i>ma</i> -forms, cases with ACC	<i>ma</i> -forms, total <sup>16</sup>
1.	<i>rinktis</i> ‘choose (for oneself)’	305	1324
2.	<i>pasirinkti</i> ‘choose (for oneself)’	28	2677
3.	<i>prisiminti</i> ‘remember’	19	1450
4.	<i>aiškintis</i> ‘find out (for oneself)’	15	2053
5.	<i>įsimylėti</i> ‘fall in love’	15	69
6.	<i>skolintis</i> ‘borrow (for oneself)’	14	633
7.	<i>nuomotis</i> ‘rent (for oneself)’	7	28

15 The verb *klotis* can also mean ‘make (a bed)’, but in the attested example of an impersonal with an accusative object it was used in the more abstract meaning ‘build (foundation)’, therefore we list this meaning here.

16 The figures given in this column show the total amount of *ma*-forms of each transitive reflexive in both corpora. A *ma*-form of a transitive reflexive may be used with a nominative subject, with an accusative object, or it may have a genitival, an infinitival or a clausal complement or no arguments at all.

No.	Verbal lexeme	<i>ma</i> -forms, cases with ACC	<i>ma</i> -forms, total
8.	<i>mokytis</i> ‘study, learn’	6	3303
9.	<i>pasitelkti</i> ‘resort to (the aid of)’	6	1232
10.	<i>įsigyti</i> ‘acquire (for oneself)’	5	896
11.	<i>pasitikti</i> ‘meet’	5	134
12.	<i>vilk̄tis</i> ‘put on’	5	15
13.	<i>draustis</i> ‘insure (oneself)’	3	46
14.	<i>pasiīmti</i> ‘take (with oneself)’	3	71
15.	<i>ūžsid̄ėti</i> ‘put on’	3	37
16.	<i>vytis</i> ‘chase (after somebody)’	3	12
17.	<i>apsirengti</i> ‘put clothes on oneself’	2	31
18.	<i>įsisavinti</i> ‘master; absorb’	2	599
19.	<i>īšsiaīškinti</i> ‘find out (for oneself)’	2	457
20.	<i>kviestis</i> ‘invite (to one’s place)’	2	25
21.	<i>nusipirkti</i> ‘buy (for oneself)’	2	81
22.	<i>parsisiųsti</i> ‘download (for oneself)’	2	81
23.	<i>pasirašyti</i> ‘sign’	2	1681
24.	<i>plautis</i> ‘wash (one’s hands etc.)’	2	2
25.	<i>prisīimti</i> ‘take (upon oneself)’	2	276
26.	<i>susirasti</i> ‘find (for oneself)’	2	35
27.	<i>vežtis</i> ‘carry (with oneself)’	2	15
Total		464	17263

TABLE 3. Reflexive-based impersonals with accusative objects in DLKT and ltTenTen14

Our data shows that the lexical input of impersonals with accusative objects also comprises prefixed reflexives. As mentioned in section 2, the *ma*-forms of prefixed reflexives are not morphologically defective; they can be used in canonical agreeing passives with nominative subjects, and this is in fact the dominant pattern with most of these verbs. Examples (19) and (20) are given as an illustration:



unprefixed reflexives, which do not have many occurrences in the *ma*-form in both corpora, seem to favour the accusative pattern over the nominative pattern, and we also found additional examples of the accusative pattern though Google searches, as presented in Table 5 below.

As can be seen from the data in Table 5, the *ma*-forms of unprefixed reflexives *vilktis* ‘put on’, *vežtis* ‘carry (with oneself)’, *vytis* ‘chase (after somebody)’ and *kviestis* ‘invite (to one’s place)’ have either the same or a larger number of attestations with the accusative pattern than with the nominative pattern. Thus, we think that unprefixed reflexives have a greater predisposition to the accusative pattern than the prefixed ones.

Verbal form	ltTenTen14 + DLKT (corpus.vdu.lt)				Google
	ACC	NOM	OTHER <sup>17</sup>	TOTAL	ACC
<i>velkamasi</i> ‘put on’	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	3	11	<b>5</b>
<i>vežamasi</i> ‘carry (with oneself)’	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	11	14	<b>6</b>
<i>vejamasi</i> ‘chase (after somebody)’	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	7	12	<b>7</b>
<i>kviečiamasi</i> ‘invite (to one’s place)’	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	22	26	<b>8</b>

TABLE 5. Nominative vs. accusative pattern in *ma*-forms of certain reflexives in DLKT, ltTenTen14 and other internet sources

#### 4.2 Accusative vs. nominative pattern

In the previous section we saw that many unprefixed reflexives favour the accusative pattern. In this section we present an analysis of 7 reflexives which had the most attested cases of impersonals with accusative objects in our sample, see Table 6. Our goal was to investigate which pattern is preferred when both are attested.

The figures in Table 6 show that three reflexives, namely, *prisiminti* ‘remember’, *aiškintis* ‘find out (for oneself)’ and *skolintis* ‘borrow (for oneself)’, clearly prefer the nominative pattern when used in the *ma*-form. The verb *rinktis* ‘choose (for oneself)’ has more attestations of the use with an accusa-

17 The category ‘OTHER’ comprises cases where the passive participle is used with a genitival or infinitival or clausal complement or no argument at all. In those cases the use of the accusative or the nominative pattern is impossible.

Verbal lexeme	ltTenTen14 + DLKT (corpus.vdu.lt)		
	PRS.PP + NOM	PRS.PP + ACC	TOTAL
<i>rinktīs</i> ‘choose (for oneself)’	50.4% (362)	<b>49.6% (356)</b>	100% (718)
<i>įsimylėti</i> ‘fall in love’	44.4% (12)	<b>55.6% (15)</b>	100% (27)
<i>nuomotis</i> ‘rent (for oneself)’	22.2% (2)	<b>77.8% (7)</b>	100% (9)
<i>skolintis</i> ‘borrow (for oneself)’	69.6% (32)	30.4% (14)	100% (46)
<i>prisiminti</i> ‘remember’	99.5% (3699)	0.5% (19)	100% (3718)
<i>aiškintis</i> ‘find out (for oneself)’	93.6% (218)	6.4% (15)	100% (233)

TABLE 6. The occurrence of ACC vs. NOM in Lithuanian reflexive-based passives in ltTenTen14 and DLKT

tive object in an impersonal construction than any other verb in our sample. Interestingly, with this verb the accusative pattern is nearly as well represented as the nominative pattern in both corpora. The verb *įsimylėti* ‘fall in love’ is curious, as it predominantly occurs in the accusative pattern in both corpora, although it is a prefixed reflexive. We have an idea that this might be related to the Animacy Hierarchy, as the object complement of this verb typically refers to a human, cf. (21). The verb *nuomotis* ‘rent (for oneself)’ also has more attestations of the use in the accusative pattern than in the nominative pattern but the number of examples is too small to make any generalizations.

- (21) *Pagalvokime, kaip į-si-myli-m-a*  
 think.IMP.PL.1 how PVB-RFL-fall\_in\_love-PRS.PP-NA  
*būsimą žmoną ar vyrą.* (ltTenTen14)  
 be.FUT.PA.ACC.SG wife.ACC.SG or husband.ACC.SG  
 ‘Think how one falls in love with one’s future wife or husband.’

#### 4.3 Formal and semantic properties of reflexive-based impersonals

Geniušienė (2016, 123) claims that the non-promoted accusative object in the impersonal passive constructions occurs post-verbally. However, our data shows that the accusative object in a reflexive-based impersonal may both precede and follow the participle; its position in the clause is determined by the general word-order rules of the language (mostly information structure), e.g.:

- (22) *Slapyvardžius renka-m-a-si dėl jų*  
 pseudonym.ACC.PL choose-PST.PP-NA-RFL because\_of their  
*skambumo ir įmantrumo.* (ItTenTen14)  
 clang.GEN.SG and pretentiousness.GEN.SG  
 ‘**Pseudonyms** are chosen because of their sound and pretentiousness.’

- (23) *Lietuvoje vis dažniau nuomoja-m-a-si*  
 PLN.LOC more\_and\_more\_ofTEN rent-PRS.PP-NA-RFL  
*automobilius.* (ItTenTen14)  
 car.ACC.PL  
 ‘In Lithuania **cars** are rented more and more often.’

Lastly, we will briefly consider the semantics of reflexive-based impersonals. According to Geniušienė (2016, 123), in impersonal passives with accusative objects, the implied agent is typically generic or indefinite and “the passive participle within the predicate appears in the present tense”. Most of our data complies with these observations, the present tense auxiliary is usually omitted and the construction, as typical for *m*-passives, has a habitual-generic sense (cf. examples (22), (23)). However, the impersonal construction may also refer to an ongoing event and convey the meaning of progressive aspect:

- (24) *Vyriškis, kurio asmenybę šiuo metu*  
 man.NOM.SG REL.GEN.SG.M personality.ACC.SG presently  
*aiškina-m-a-si,*  
 find\_out-PRS.PP-NA-RFL  
 [24-erių metų vaikiniui smogė ranka į veidą.] (ItTenTen14)  
 ‘The man whose identity **is** presently **being investigated**  
 [hit the 24-year-old man in the face with his hand.]

In rare cases, the impersonal construction may be used with a past tense auxiliary and have the meaning of habitual past:

- (25) [*Marškinius krūtinės srityje puošė sagos ir*]  
*iki tol šį apdarą buvo*  
 until\_that\_time this.ACC.SG.M piece\_of\_clothing.ACC.SG be.PST3  
*velka-m-a-si per galvą.* (ItTenTen14)  
 put\_on-PRS.PP-NA-RFL over head.ACC.SG

‘[The shirt was decorated with buttons on the chest and] until that time it **was worn pulling it** over the head.’

- (26) *Didžiausiems protestams būdavo*  
 big.SUPER.DAT.PL.M action.DAT.PL be.HAB.PST3  
*pa-si-renka-m-a pirmojo protesto*  
 PVB-RFL-choose-PRS.PP-NA first.GEN.SG.M.DEF action.GEN.SG  
*diena – kovo 8-oji.)*  
 day.NOM.SG March 8  
 ‘For large-scale actions the day of the first protest demonstration, the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, **was** usually **chosen**.’

Although impersonals with accusative objects are basically restricted to present passive participles, we found 20 examples with a past passive participle used with a retained accusative object. In these cases the impersonal construction refers to a past event, which has usually occurred several times:

- (27) *Po 6 kartus rink-t-a-si vardus Austėja,*  
 PREP 6 time.ACC.PL choose-PST.PP-NA-RFL name.ACC.PL PN.NOM  
*Gustė, Eva ir Luka. (ItTenTen14)*  
 PN.NOM PN.NOM and PN.NOM  
 ‘The names Austėja, Gustė, Eva and Luka **were chosen** 6 times each.’

Occasionally, it can refer to a single past event and imply a definite agent whose referent is retrievable from context. Example (28) is given as an illustration:

- (28) [*Pirmame ir antrame ture vaikai turėjo atsakyti į klausimus apie lietuvių kalbą, trečiame ture buvo sprendžiami galvosūkių ir menamos mįslės,] paskutiniame – dar kartą tikrin-t-a-si žinias*  
 last.LOC.SG.M once\_again check-PST.PP-NA-RFL knowledge.ACC.PL  
*apie saugų elgesį internete. (ItTenTen14)*  
 about safe.ACC.SG behaviour.ACC.SG internet.LOC.SG  
 ‘[In the first and second session the children had to answer questions about the Lithuanian language, in the third session puzzles and riddles were being solved] and in the last session the children once again **checked** their knowledge about safe behaviour on the internet.’

Examples of past passive participles of reflexives with non-promoted accusative objects are cases of the cumulative-retrospective construction, which operates on past passive participles (for details, see Nau, Spraunienė & Žeimantienė 2020, 99).

## 5 Concluding remarks

In this paper we investigated reflexive-based impersonals with accusative objects. We found that impersonals with accusative objects have indeed spread within the domain of transitive reflexives which semantically can be characterized as **autobenefactives**. The subject of an autobenefactive reflexive benefits from the event expressed by the verb. We assume that the spread of impersonals started with unprefixing reflexives which are morphologically defective: they cannot form the agreeing passive forms due to the verb-final reflexive marker. Our data shows that impersonals with accusative objects have also extended to prefixed transitive reflexives which are not morphologically defective and can form agreeing passive participles. The frequency of the accusative *vs.* nominative pattern is dependent on the verbal lexeme. Some transitive reflexives, e.g. *rinktis* ‘choose (for oneself)’, *vilk̃tis* ‘put on’, *vėžit̃is* ‘carry (with oneself)’, *vytis* ‘chase (after somebody)’, *kviest̃is* ‘invite (to one’s place)’ and *įsimylėti* ‘fall in love’ have either the same or a larger number of attested cases with the accusative pattern than with the nominative pattern. However, the majority of transitive reflexives (especially the prefixed ones) in our sample clearly favour the nominative pattern over the accusative pattern when used in a *ma*-form. Unprefixing reflexives seem to have a greater predisposition to the accusative pattern than non-prefixing reflexives. More research is needed in order to determine the factors that determine the choice between the nominative and the accusative pattern in reflexive-based impersonals/passives. The meaning of reflexive-based impersonals is mostly habitual generic, in rare cases they refer to an ongoing event (progressive aspect) or a habitual past event. Occasionally, also past passive participles of transitive reflexives may be used with non-promoted accusative objects. Such uses pertain to the cumulative-retrospective construction.

Thus we see that impersonals with accusative objects, which have been nearly ousted from the Lithuanian language because of standardization processes in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have again gained access to language use through *-ma* forms of transitive reflexives.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Nicole Nau, Jurgis Pakerys, Inesa Šeškauskienė and Wayles Browne for valuable comments and suggestions for revision of an earlier version of this article. Needless to say that we are solely responsible for all the remaining shortcomings. We would also like to express our gratitude to Axel Holvoet for teaching us how to do linguistic research.

## Abbreviations

1, 2, 3—first, second, third person, ACC—accusative, DAT—dative, DEF—definite, F—feminine, GEN—genitive, HAB—habitual, IMP—imperative, INF—infinitive, LOC—locative, M—masculine, NA—non-agreement form, NEG—negation, NOM—nominative, PL—plural, PLN—place name, PN—proper name, POSS—possessive, PP—passive participle, PREP—preposition, PRS—present, PST—past, PVB—preverb, REL—relativizer, RFL—reflexive, RPOSS—reflexive possessive pronoun, SG—singular, SUPER—superlative

## Sources

DLKT—Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos tekstynas, [http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas\\_corpus.vdu.lt](http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas_corpus.vdu.lt)  
ItTenTen14—Lithuanian Web Corpus, <https://www.sketchengine.eu/lttenten-lithuanian-corpus/>

## References

- Ambrasas, Vytautas *et al.* 2006. *Lithuanian Grammar*. Second revised edition. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.
- Arkadiev, Peter. 2014. Glagol'naja restriktivnost' v litovskom jazyke. [Verbal restrictivity in Lithuanian]. In *Acta linguistica Petropolitana: Studia typologica octogenario Victori Khrakovskij Samuelis filio dedicata*. St. Petersburg: Nauka. 12–42.
- Blevins, James P. 2003. Passives and impersonals. *Journal of Linguistics* 39, 473–520. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022226703002081>
- Danylenko, Andrii. 2005. Impersonal constructions with the accusative case in Lithuanian and Slavic (A Reply to Axel Holvoet). *Zeitschrift für Slawistik* 50 (2), 147–160.
- Geniušienė, Emma. 1987. *The Typology of Reflexives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Geniušienė, Emma Š. 2006. Passives in Lithuanian (in comparison with Russian). In *Passivization and Typology: Form and Function*. Werner Abraham & Larisa Leisiö, eds. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 29–61.
- Geniušienė, Emma Š. 2016. *Passive constructions in Lithuanian*. Selected Works of Emma Geniušienė edited by Anna Kibort & Nijolė Maskaliūnienė. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1075/slcs.179>

- Haspelmath, Martin. 2011. The indeterminacy of word segmentation and the nature of morphology and syntax. *Folia Linguistica* 45(1), 31–80. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/flin.2011.002>
- Holvoet, Axel. 2001. Impersonals and passives in Baltic and Finnic. In *The Circum-Baltic Languages. Typology and Contact, vol. 2. Grammar and Typology*. Östen Dahl & Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, eds. Amsterdam & Philadelphia. 363–389.
- Holvoet, Axel. 2016. Lithuanian Inflection. In *The Oxford Handbook of Inflection*. Matthew Baerman, ed. Oxford University Press. 448–464. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199591428.013.19
- Holvoet, Axel. 2020. *The Middle Voice in Baltic*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1075/vargreb.5>
- Junčytė, Giedrė. 2016. Middle marking in change in body posture verbs in Lithuanian. In *Baltu filologija*, t. 25, no 1, 59–78.
- Kibort, Anna. 2006. On three different types of subjectlessness and how to model them in LFG. In *Proceedings of the LFG06 Conference*. Miriam Butt and Tracy Holloway King, eds. Universität Konstanz, CSLI Publications. 289–309.
- Korostenskiene, Julija. 2017. On binding, lexical and superlexical prefixes and *si* in the Baltic verb. *Canadian Journal of Linguistics/Revue canadienne de linguistique* 62(3), 449–501. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/cnj.2016.38>
- LKG = *Lietuvių kalbos gramatika*. [Grammar of the Lithuanian Language]. 1971. 2 t. Vilnius: Mintis.
- Malchukov, Andrej, Anna Siewierska. 2011. Introduction. In *Impersonal Constructions. A cross-linguistic perspective*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. 1–15.
- Nau, Nicole & Peter Arkadiev. 2015. The Salos Glossing Rules. *Baltic Linguistics* 6, 195–241. doi: <https://doi.org/10.32798/bl.398>
- Nau, Nicole, Birutė Spraukienė & Vaiva Žeimantienė. 2020. The Passive Family in Baltic. *Baltic Linguistics* 11, 27–128. doi: <https://doi.org/10.32798/bl.699>
- Spraukienė, Birutė, Auksė Razanovaitė, Erika Jasionytė. 2015. Solving the Puzzle of the Lithuanian passive. In *Voice and Argument Structure in Baltic*. Axel Holvoet & Nicole Nau, eds. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 323–366. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1075/vargreb.2.07spr>
- Tognini-Bonelli, Elena. 2001. *Corpus Linguistics at Work*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1075/scl.6>

Submitted: 28 February 2021