

# Some Implications for Ērika: Implicatives in Danish, Finnish and Lithuanian

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*Abstract:* The article deals with implicative verbs, i.e., verbs that, both in their affirmative and negative forms, carry implications as to the factual status of their propositional complements, e.g. *manage, forget, bother* etc. Karttunen (1971), who introduced the notion, already pointed out that a verb that is implicative in one language need not necessarily have implicative counterparts in other languages. It is conceivable that some languages have semantic groups of implicatives not represented, or less well represented, in other languages, and this deserves to be investigated. In this article the authors offer just a very preliminary exploration based on three languages, one North Germanic, one Fennic, and one Baltic. They show that even such a small sample may reveal interesting differences. The authors also pause over certain general tendencies in the semantic development of implicatives. While most of the work on implicatives has been done in the tradition of formal semantics, the authors show that a more cognitively oriented approach (invoking mechanisms of subjectification) can yield valuable insights into the polysemy of implicatives.

## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In 1971 Lauri Karttunen formulated the notion of implicative verbs, by which he means verbs that, both in their affirmative and their negative varieties, carry certain implications as to the factuality of the situation

<sup>1</sup> We wish to thank Kirsi Podschivalow for her assistance with the Finnish data and Peter Juul Nielsen for his useful comments on the Danish implicatives. We also thank an anonymous reviewer for useful suggestions and criticisms. For any shortcomings we remain solely responsible.

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Shaping the Rings of the Scandinavian Fellowship. Festschrift in Honour of Ērika Sausverde. Edited by Ieva Steponavičiūtė Aleksiejūnienė and Loreta Vaicekauskienė. (Scandinavistica Vilnensis 14). Vilnius University Press, 2019.

<https://doi.org/10.15388/ScandinavisticaVilnensis.2019.11>

described by their propositional complement. A typical example is *manage*<sup>2</sup>:

- (1) *Solomon managed to build the Temple.*
- (2) *Solomon didn't manage to build the Temple.*

(1) entails *Solomon built the Temple*, whereas (2) entails *Solomon did not build the Temple*. With some verbs polarity is reversed, but a two-way implication still holds:

- (3) *Solomon forgot to build the Temple.*
- (4) *Solomon did not forget to build the Temple.*

(3) entails *Solomon did not build the Temple*, whereas (4) usually<sup>3</sup> entails *Solomon built the Temple*. Karttunen's article came a year after Kiparsky and Kiparsky's (1970) equally famous article on factivity. The latter gave rise to the notion of factive complement-taking verbs, which presuppose the factual status of their complements, cf.

- (5) *Solomon regretted having built the Temple.*
- (6) *Solomon did not regret having built the Temple.*

As both (5) and (6) can only be felicitously used if the Temple has indeed been built, the building of the Temple is, in this case, a presupposition. Karttunen points out that implicative predicates also carry certain presuppositions, e.g. (1) and (2) usually presuppose that there were serious obstacles to the building of the Temple, and that Solomon made a directed effort at overcoming these obstacles.

Karttunen furthermore points out that a verb that is implicative in one language need not have this property in other languages. He gives a list of Finnish implicatives that have no English equivalents. An example would be *arvata* 'guess':

2 Where it is not otherwise stated, the examples are constructed.

3 Unless, of course, one pronounces *forget* with a contrastive stress, as when wanting to say that it was not out of forgetfulness but for some other reason that Solomon failed to build the Temple.

## (7) Finnish

*Arvasimme tulla juhlaan oikeaan aikaan.*  
 guess.PST.1PL come.INF party.ILL.SG right.ILL.SG time.ILL.SG

‘We contrived to arrive at the party at the right time.’

(i.e. ‘we guessed what the best time to arrive would be and arrived at that time’)

Implicatives have hitherto drawn attention mainly from scholars working in the tradition of formal semantics. Their purpose has been to gain insight in the exact nature of the presuppositions associated with the use of an implicative, to establish what exactly is asserted by an implicative verb, etc. But what we know about the existence of language-specific (types of) implicative verbs suggests it might also be worthwhile looking at implicatives cross-linguistically. Noonan (2007, 139) briefly mentions implicatives (under the name ‘achievement predicates’) in his overview of complementation types but says nothing about typological variation, probably because no interesting variation in expression specific to implicative verbs is to be expected: whatever pattern is used in a given language for complement types involving systematic identity of main-clause and complement-clause subjects, such as those of desiderative or modal verbs, will probably also be used with implicative verbs. These will belong to what has been called the ‘state-of-affairs’ type of complement clauses, as opposed to the propositional type used, e.g., with verbs of saying, knowing etc. (cf. Kehayov & Boye, 2016, 812–818). Differences will concern the semantic domains in which implicative verbs occur; they are therefore a subject for lexical typology.

This article offers no more than a very preliminary exploration of the cross-linguistic study of implicatives; it is based on a small convenience sample comprising the languages on which the authors happen to be working. Still, the authors hope that this exploration, as well as their thoughts on the semantic description of implicatives, will prove to be of some use. For considerations of space, we basically leave phrasal implicatives (Karttunen, 2012) out of consideration.

The structure of the article is as follows. In section 2, we will present some general considerations on the semantic properties of implicatives and the different ways in which one can look at them. Next, we will attempt a rough and preliminary semantic grouping of implicatives and try to identify a few groups where the languages under discussion show interesting differences. By way of conclusion, we offer a few preliminary generalizations.

## 2. On the semantics of implicatives

Almost all that has been written on implicatives has been written in the tradition of formal semantics. Authors working in this tradition have raised important questions and gained valuable insights, and we will briefly discuss a number of interesting points touched upon in the literature. We will argue, however, that a discussion of the semantics of implicatives can also profit from a more cognitively oriented approach.

Karttunen characterizes the semantics of constructions with implicatives by pointing out the following features: (i) there are certain presuppositions associated with the use of implicatives, and (ii) a presupposed state of affairs is viewed as a necessary and sufficient condition for the realization of what is expressed by the complement. Consider (8):

(8) *John remembered to turn off the light.*

This sentence carries background presuppositions to the effect that John is under an obligation to turn off the light (e.g., before leaving his workplace), and that he is willing to carry out this obligation; there is also a specific presupposition to the effect that John's remembering the obligation is a necessary and sufficient condition for his performing it. The act of uttering (8) amounts to stating that this specific presupposition is satisfied, and the truth of the embedded proposition automatically follows. A crucial element of Karttunen's analysis is that, truth-conditionally, the implicative predicate adds nothing to what is asserted by the embedded clause; all it adds is the commitment to certain presuppositions. In a later formulation (Karttunen, 2014), the notion of presupposition is replaced with that of conventional implicature. This lack of truth-conditional content – the actual occurrence of the event described in the embedded proposition being automatically captured by the status of 'sufficient condition' – is one of the elements in Karttunen's analysis that have been challenged. Writing on *manage*, Baglini and Francez (2016, 546) claim that this verb "makes a non-trivial truth-conditional contribution". A sentence of the type 'manage *p*' "presupposes the familiarity of a 'catalyst', a causally necessary, but causally insufficient condition for the truth of *p*, and asserts that the catalyst actually caused the truth of *p*". This proposal for improvement of Karttunen's analysis seems intuitively convincing because, assuming free will in humans, no external circumstance or catalyst can ever be a sufficient condition for the accomplishment of an act.

But there are problems of a more general nature with the reliance on presuppositions in describing the semantics of implicatives. Coleman (1975) draws attention to ‘shifting’ presuppositions with *manage*. Karttunen assumes ‘trying’ is an essential presupposition for the use of *manage*, but as Coleman points out, there are many contexts where this does not apply:

(9) *My dog manages to get clawed by every cat that comes along.*

Moreover, the subject of *manage* may be inanimate or ambient, in which case no attempts could possibly be involved:

(10) *It always manages to rain on my day off.*

Coleman suggests this can be accounted for by operating with a hierarchical ordering of presuppositions, presuppositional elements incompatible with the context being successively filtered out: if the presupposition ‘the subject tried to achieve *p*’ fails, the weaker presupposition ‘*p* is difficult to achieve’ is substituted, and if that fails as well, what remains is ‘*p* is unlikely’.

This account in terms of ‘vanishing presuppositions’ was devised in order to avoid recognizing polysemy (or ‘homonymy’, as Coleman, true to the spirit of the times, puts it). The monosemy assumption pervades the whole literature in the tradition of formal semantics, and therefore also almost all of what has been written on implicatives. The assumption is usually that a linguistic sign can only have one meaning, and that apparent meaning differences must originate in pragmatics. Perhaps the study of implicatives could profit from an approach in the spirit of cognitive linguistics, based on the assumption that one linguistic sign may correspond to several conceptual structures mutually linked by recurrent patterns of semantic change such as metaphor, pragmatic strengthening etc. and thus forming a network, as has been argued in a large body of literature starting with Brugman & Lakoff (1988). This principled polysemy approach is also more in keeping with the purposes of cross-linguistic comparison, which is badly served by a monosemic approach.

A use like (9) could be characterized as an instance of irony, in which case we would have to look for an explanation in pragmatic terms. But we could also consider a semantic account in terms of subjectification, that is, a shift “from ‘propositional’ to ‘textual’ meanings, or from describing

an external Situation to reflecting evaluative, perceptual, or cognitive aspects of the ‘internal Situation’” (Langacker, 1990, 16, with reference to the pioneering work of Elisabeth Closs Traugott, starting with Traugott, 1982). When we compare (1) to (9), we may note a shift from an obstacle in the real world (the material difficulties standing in the way of the erection of the Temple) to an obstacle in the world of beliefs – the building of the Temple being a formidable task, its successful completion is unexpected, and unexpectedness is what remains from the original meaning in (9). A further metaphoric transfer enables the shift to inanimate or ambient subjects in cases like (10). Such processes are semantic, not pragmatic in nature, and they form regular patterns: as we will see below, a similar shift from reference to states of affairs in the extralinguistic world to evaluative meanings is characteristic of many implicatives. To discover a general pattern of this kind seems somehow more profitable than seeking *ad hoc* reasons for shifting presuppositions in every particular case.

In a more recent publication, Karttunen (2014) gives as a rule of thumb for describing the meanings of implicatives that they all “suggest [...] or conventionally implicate that there is some obstacle that must be overcome for the infinitival clause to be true”. We agree with this characterization but prefer to assume that the obstacle to be overcome is not conventionally implicated but linguistically encoded. As a result of different semantic processes the ‘obstacle’ may be variously reinterpreted, as the example of *manage* shows. But the obstacle may also, as long as it is situated in the extralinguistic world, be of different kinds, and it is here that cross-linguistic variation may manifest itself. Karttunen has already drawn attention to Finnish as a language rich in implicatives, adding jocularly that “having a specific implicative verb available for so many obstacles makes Finnish a great language for pithy excuses” (Karttunen, 2014). If this is the case, then perhaps Finnish implicatives are especially well represented in certain domains, whereas other languages specialize in other domains? This is, in our view, an interesting research question. It requires, of course, an adequate classification, which it will perhaps be possible to give only at a later stage, on the basis of broader empirical data. The classification used here is only preliminary and largely intuitive. The obstacles Karttunen refers to may remain unspecified, as in the case of *manage*, or they may be specified, as in the case of *remember*. In this classification, we set apart a group of implicatives that are non-specific in the sense of being noncommittal as to the nature of the obstacles, and several groups of more specific implicatives singled out

according to the nature of the obstacles involved – mental, emotive, social, physical and spatio-motoric.

### 3. Non-specific implicatives

All three languages examined here have several non-specific implicatives, by which we mean implicatives referring to an agent bringing about the occurrence of an event in spite of certain unspecified obstacles, such as *manage* and *succeed*. We can distinguish two subtypes here, one laying more emphasis on the subject's skills whereas the other emphasizes external circumstances. The second type has a preference, in many languages, for impersonal constructions, with the subject-agent as a dative argument. This can be seen in Danish, which has *evne* 'manage', representing the first subtype (14) and *lykkes* 'succeed', representing the second (15):

(14) Danish

*Hun evnede at gøre vore mange hjem smukke.*  
 she manage.PST to make.INF our many home.PL beautiful  
 'She managed to make many of our homes beautiful.' (KorpusDK)

(15)

*Det lykkedes mig at gennemføre en udveksling:*  
 it succeed.PST me to accomplish.INF an exchange  
 [kgl. dansk porcelæn mod Chile rødvin.]  
 'I succeeded in securing an exchange: Royal Danish china for Chile red wine.' (KorpusDK)

The same holds for Lithuanian, which has *sugebėti* 'manage' and *pa-vykti* 'succeed':

(16) Lithuanian

*Konkurs-e užduot-ys buvo ne-lengv-os,*  
 competition-LOC.SG task-NOM.PL be.PST.3 NEG-easy-NOM.PL.F  
*bet aš sugebėjau jas atlik-ti.*  
 but 1SG.NOM manage.PST.1SG 3.ACC.PL.F accomplish-INF  
 'The competition tasks were not easy, but a managed to solve them.'<sup>4</sup>

4 <https://setosgimnazija.lt/kalbu-kengura-rusu-kalba>.

(17)

*Turist-ė teigia, kad jai pavyko*  
 tourist[F]-NOM.SG claim.PRS.3 that 3.DAT.SG.F succeed.PST.3  
*įamžin-ti garsi-ąjį Lochnes-o pabais-ą.*  
 immortalize-INF famous-ACC.SG.F.DEF Loch.Ness-GEN monster-ACC.SG  
 ‘The tourist claims she succeeded in capturing forever the famous  
 monster of Loch Ness.’<sup>5</sup>

Finnish has the same lexeme for both, but has a similar syntactic differentiation as Danish and Lithuanian: the construction is either personal (18) or impersonal (19):

(18) Finnish

*Minä onnistuin pakenemaan.*  
 1SG.NOM manage.PST.1SG escape.INF3.ILL  
 ‘I managed to escape.’

(19)

*Minun onnistui paeta.*  
 1SG.GEN succeed.PST.3SG escape.INF  
 ‘I succeeded in escaping.’

A second group puts less emphasis on the adverse influence of circumstances and on the need for a subject to surmount these. The occurrence of the event is driven by circumstances rather than by the subject’s will:

(20)

*Claudia became the project scientist of the Rosetta mission where she got to work with NASA’s European counterpart, the European Space Agency.*<sup>6</sup>

Implicatives of this type seem to develop out of acquisitive verbs like ‘get’ (ultimately also a source for modal verbs, cf. van der Auwera, Kehayov & Vittrant, 2009) and verbs of motion like ‘come’, the borderline between the two not always being clear (e.g. English *get* can be

5 <https://www.gismeteo.lt/news/naujienos/4861-ar-tai-nese-turiste-teigia-kad-jai-pavyko-iamzinti-garsiaja-lochneso-pabaisa>.

6 <https://www.aps.org/careers/physicists/profiles/calexander.cfm>.



acquisitive but is also used as a motion verb: *How did you get there?*). Danish has both sources. The productive construction has ‘come’:

(21) Danish

*Hun kom bestemt ikke til at kede sig.*  
 she come.PST certainly not till to bore.INF REFL  
 ‘She definitely did not have occasion to be bored.’ (KorpusDK)

Danish *få* ‘get’ is, at least in the contemporary language, severely restricted lexically, occurring mainly with a few verbs of cognition and perception in what appear to be fixed expressions:

(22) Danish

[*Hun måtte ikke kontakte ham og*]  
*hun fik ikke at vide hvor han var.*  
 she get.PST not to know.INF where he be.PST  
 ‘She couldn’t get in touch with him and couldn’t get to know where he was.’ (KorpusDK)

Here the subject is a theme in motion towards a certain type of situation, but the spatial conceptualization may also be reversed, with the event as a theme and the agent as a recipient/goal, a pattern to be found in Lithuanian:

(23) Lithuanian

[*Tai buvo neįtikėtina, nes*]  
*man niekadoms neteko regėti kažko panašaus.*  
 1SG.DAT never fall.to.PST.3 see.INF something.GEN similar.GEN.SG.M  
 ‘[It was unbelievable, because] I had I never had occasion to see anything similar.’<sup>7</sup>

A reverse non-specific implicative is ‘omit’, here represented only by Danish *undlade*, without exact equivalents in Lithuanian and Finnish though phrasal implicatives may be used to fill the gap. It is interesting in that this verb meets the formal conditions for implicatives but prepositions differ considerably according to polarity. The affirmative

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.lrytas.lt/sportas/atsukam-laika/2018/06/11/news/saras-pries-desimtmeti-apie-lemtinga-klaida-nba-ir-pamisuusius-sirgalius-atenuose-6516716>.

form suggests failure to comply with an obligation or general norm of behaviour, but remains vague about the reasons of non-compliance (forgetfulness, carelessness, willful non-compliance etc.). The negative construction is usually ironical and suggests a person indulging a none too creditable character trait:

(24) Danish

*Han undlod at betale Mejerigaarden for*  
 he omit.PST to pay.INF dairy.farm.DEF for  
*store mængder is.*  
 large quantity.PL icecream

‘He omitted to pay the dairy farm for large quantities of icecream.’<sup>8</sup>

(25) Danish

[*Da mormor døde, åbnede tante Selma en flaske cognac for at fejre det,*]  
*hun undlod ikke at fortælle alle, der kom*  
 she omit.PST NEG to tell.INF all who come.PST  
*til begravelsen,*  
 to funeral.DEF

[*at det var en meget fin flaske.*]

‘[When Grandmother died, aunt Selma opened a bottle of brandy to celebrate,]  
 and she took care to tell all who came to the funeral that it was a very fine bottle.’

(Linn Ulmann, *Før du sover*, transl. Martin Dennis)

Discreditable character traits are not proscribed by formal laws but may invite censure, so that, in order to offer a unified account for (24) and (25), we could suggest that the subject in (25) fails to comply with an unwritten law requiring people to refrain from indulging bad tendencies. The actual presuppositions behind (25) are different, and the shift seems to be, at first glance, pragmatic, but it might in fact reflect a general tendency for implicatives to acquire an evaluating function, on which see below.

8 [https://www.food-supply.dk/article/view/612508/stor\\_slikgrossist\\_tomte\\_selskab\\_for\\_millionbelob](https://www.food-supply.dk/article/view/612508/stor_slikgrossist_tomte_selskab_for_millionbelob).

#### 4. The mental sphere

All three languages have specific implicatives singling out a mental process as determining the event named in the embedded predicate. The most widespread mental implicatives include ‘remember (to do something)’ and ‘forget’. Another aspect of mental activity is ‘presence of mind’, i.e. the ability quickly to devise an adequate course of action apposite to the situation. Finnish uses its verb ‘know’ for this meaning:

- (26) Finnish  
*Mistä tiesit etsiä täältä?*  
 how know.PST.2SG search.INF here.ABL.SG  
 ‘How did you think of searching here?’<sup>9</sup>

Lithuanian and Finnish use the verb ‘understand’ in more or less the same sense (in Lithuanian a special reflexive form is used):

- (27) Lithuanian  
*Gaila, ne-su-si-pratau paklausti, kiek*  
 pity NEG-PFX-REFL-understand.PST.1SG ask.INF how.much  
*ta paslauga kainuoja...*  
 DEM.NOM.SG.F service.NOM.SG cost.PRS.3SG  
 ‘Unfortunately I didn’t have the presence of mind to ask how much this service costs.’<sup>10</sup>

- (28) Finnish  
*En ymmärtänyt kiittää kukka-asetelmista.*  
 NEG.1SG understand.PART.PST thank.INF flower.setting.ELAT.PL  
 ‘It did not even cross my mind to thank for the flower settings.’<sup>11</sup>

Other expressions, like Danish *falde ind* and the Lithuanian phrasal implicative (cf. Karttunen, 2012) *šauti į galvą*, use a motion metaphor and a syntactic structure in which the thought is the subject-theme and the person is an indirect object:

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.kielitoimistonsanakirja.fi>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://maga.lt/12171>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://fi-fi.facebook.com/pontuksenkioski/> (a public post from 29.05.2018 by Mika Hänninen).

## (29) Danish

*Så faldt det ham ind at kigge i telefonbogen,*  
 so fall.PST it him in to look.INF in phone.book.DEF  
 [og så fandt han endelig sit nye hjem.]

‘Then it occurred to him to check the phone book, [and so he found his new home at last].’

(KorpusDK)

## (30) Lithuanian

*Tik ne-šovė į galvą patikrinti klaviatūros [...],*  
 only NEG-leap.PST.3 into head.ACC.SG check.INF keyboard.GEN.SG  
 [parsinešiau namo ir žiūriu, kad neveikia dauguma mygtukų.]

‘It just didn’t enter my mind to check the keyboard [...], [I took it home and saw most of the keys didn’t work.]’<sup>12</sup>

Some languages have implicative verbs whose use presupposes that, all other conditions being satisfied, the accomplishment of an action depends only on an act of volition on the part of the subject. English *bother* belongs to this type. Finnish, true to its reputation as a language rich in implicatives, has several verbs to convey this meaning: *viitsiä*, *välittää* (only in negative sentences) and (apparently an innovation under English influence) *vaivautua*:

## (31) Finnish

*En viitsinyt ottaa mitään riskiä.*  
 NEG.1SG bother.PART.PST take.INF any risk.PRT.SG

‘I did not bother to take any risk.’<sup>13</sup>

Interestingly, Lithuanian’s sister language Latvian has borrowed the Fennic verb reflected in Finnish *viitsiä* (Latvian *nevīžot*, used only with negation). Danish seems to have no exact equivalent: *gide* is usually given as a counterpart of *bother* in dictionaries, but it does not behave as an implicative. In Lithuanian the equivalent of *bother* would be *pasi-varginti* ‘take the trouble’ (usually in an ironical sense):

<sup>12</sup> <https://rekvizitai.vz.lt/imone/televizuma/atsiliepmimai>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://hevosurheilu.fi/ravit/raviuutiset/creation-primerolle-kuskinvaihdos-en-viitsinyt-ottaa-mitaan-riskia>.

## (32) Lithuanian

*[Pirmiausia stebina tai, kad korespondentė, ketindama rašyti straipsnį, net ne-pasivargino pasikalbėti ar prisistatyti.*  
 even NEG-take.the.trouble.PST.3SG talk.INF or introduce.oneself.INF  
 [What is most surprising is that the correspondent, intending to write an article,] didn't even bother to talk [to us] or introduce herself.<sup>14</sup>

## 5. The emotive sphere

Also well represented in the three languages, and probably rather universal, is the emotive sphere. The implicative refers to a state of mind viewed as a necessary condition for the realization of an event. The obstacle the subject has to overcome is a mental inhibitor such as shame, compassion, disgust etc. As such feelings are experienced in relation to other persons, socio-emotive would perhaps be a more appropriate term, but we will reserve 'social' for those meanings specifically connected with social hierarchies.

A typical example of a socio-emotive implicative would be Danish *nænne*, which can be translated as 'to bring oneself to do sth.' The obstacle is the subject's sense of delicacy:

## (33) Danish

*Men han nænnede alligevel ikke at vække hende.*  
 but he bring.oneself.PST nevertheless NEG to wake.INF her  
 'Nevertheless he couldn't bring himself to wake her.' (KorpusDK)

Finnish has a whole set of reverse implicatives with the meaning 'be prevented from sth by shyness': *kainostella*, *arastella* and *ujostella*. They are presumably differentiated by subtle shades of meaning.

## (34) Finnish

*Todellisista tunteistaan hän-kin arasteli puhua.*  
 true.ELAT.PL feeling.ELAT.PL.3SG 3SG-also feel.shy.PST.3SG talk.INF  
 'He/she was also shy to talk about his/her true feelings.'<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.vjg.lt/naujienos/svarbu/2014/11/atsakymas-i-straipsni-delfi>.

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.hssaatio.fi/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Antti-B1%C3%A5field\\_julkistamispuhe.pdf](http://www.hssaatio.fi/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Antti-B1%C3%A5field_julkistamispuhe.pdf).

Not less abundantly represented is the opposite type, describing a situation in which a person surmounts inhibitors of various kinds. This type shows very fine distinctions as to the exact nature of the inhibitor: we have *juljeta* ‘have the impudence’, *kehdetä* ‘not be constrained by delicacy, shame etc.’, *iljetä* ‘surmount one’s repugnance’, *sumeilla* ‘have scruples’ (only with negation) etc.

(35) Finnish

*Ruotsalaispelaaja julkesi selittää*  
 Swedish.player.NOM have.the.cheek.PST3 explain.INF  
*tekoaan vahinkona.*  
 action.PRT.3SG accident.ESS.SG

‘The Swedish player had the cheek to explain his action as an accident.’<sup>16</sup>

(36)

*Hän ilkesi tulla*  
 (S)he have.the.impudence.PST.3SG come.INF  
*häiritsemään, kun tein kuolemaa.*  
 disturb.INF.3.ILL when do.PST.1SG death.PRT

‘(S)he even dared come and disturb me when I was dying.’

(Karo Hämäläinen, *Ilta on julma*)

(37)

*Hän ei sumeillut käyttää valtaansa*  
 he NEG feel.scruples.PART.PST use.INF power.PRT.3SG  
*omaksi edukseen.*  
 own.TRANS benefit.TRANS.3SG

‘He felt no scruples about using his power for his own benefit.’<sup>17</sup>

## 6. The social sphere

In this semantic group, the obstacles referred to by Karttunen are social barriers. There is no very specific reference to emotions involved in social interaction. Consider (38):

(38) *The King condescended to meet the petitioners.*

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.iltalehti.fi/nhl/201702132200069576\\_nh.shtml](https://www.iltalehti.fi/nhl/201702132200069576_nh.shtml).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.kielitoimistonsanakirja.fi>.

Though the King had, perhaps, to surmount a natural social barrier that would have prevented him from meeting the petitioners, he may not have given much thought to this aspect of his decision and what the implicative verb adds is a certain evaluation to the effect that King's readiness to meet the petitioners was extraordinarily gracious. The original notion of a social obstacle hardly ever occurs here. The 'condescend' type is represented in all three languages dealt with here, though, in our democratic times, it is probably restricted to ironical use:

## (39) Danish

*Peter nedlod sig ikke til at svare.*  
 Peter lower.PST REFL NEG till to answer.INF  
 'Peter did not condescend to answer.' (KorpusDK)

In addition to *malonėti* and *teiktis* 'deign, condescend', Lithuanian also has the reverse implicative *pasididžiuoti* 'refrain from doing sth out of pride' (this verb also means 'feel or express pride'), whose negative form *nepasididžiuoti* can be translated as 'condescend':

## (40) Lithuanian

[*Akcijos sumanytoja [...] mano, kad renginys pavyko, nors*  
*daugelis politikų ir Savivaldybės*  
 many.NOM politician.GEN.PL and Municipality.NOM  
*valdininkų pasididžiavo ateiti.*  
 official.GEN.PL feel.pride.PST.3 show.up.INF  
 '[The action's organizer [...] thinks the event was a success], though  
 many politicians and municipality officials did not deign to show up.'<sup>18</sup>

In addition to *suvaita* 'deign, condescend' Finnish also has *alentua* 'stoop to morally reprehensible behaviour':

## (41) Finnish

*Rouva ei suvainnut edes vastata kysymyksiini.*  
 lady.NOM.SG NEG deign.PART.PST even answer.INF question.ILL.PL.ISG  
 'The lady did not even deign to answer my questions.'<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.skrastas.lt/?data=2004-06-02&rub=1143711027&id=1146722913>.

<sup>19</sup> adapted from <https://www.kielitoimistonsanakirja.fi>.

(42)

*Tuomari alentui ottamaan lahjuksia.*  
 judge.NOM.SG stoop.PST.3 take.INF3.ILL bribe.PRT.PL  
 ‘The judge stooped to take bribes.’<sup>20</sup>

This seems to imply an evaluation that is not merely social but has a moral dimension, but anyway what the verb adds is only an evaluation – we do not even know whether the subject has to surmount any scruples. In this sense a verb like *alentua* is similar to implicatives in the social sphere: they do not add anything to the simple verb truth-conditionally, but add an evaluation in terms of societal norms.

### 7. The sphere of physical sensations

Can the obstacle to be surmounted, as represented by an implicative verb, be a physiological sensation rather than an emotion? It can: this sphere is represented by Finnish *tarjeta*, which reflects sensitivity to temperature:

(43) Finnish (adapted from Karttunen, 2014)

*Minä tarkenin uida.*  
 1SG.NOM be.warm.PST.1SG swim.INF  
 ‘I swam, braving the cold.’

(44)

*Minä en tarjennut uida.*  
 1SG.NOM NEG.1SG be.warm.PART.PST swim.INF  
 ‘I couldn’t get myself to brave the cold and swim.’

Here most languages would have a less specific verb like ‘dare’, but the Finnish verb additionally specifies that the subject must brave the cold in order to accomplish the feat described by the embedded infinitive. The verb *tarjeta* appears to occupy an isolated position among Finnish implicatives; there is no analogous verb referring to the act of braving the rain or ignoring a headache. So, while this example illustrates the general tendency of Finnish to be quite specific in its characterization of obstacles to be surmounted, the physiological sphere is weakly represented

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.kielitoimistonsanakirja.fi>.



in comparison to the socio-emotional one. It remains to be investigated whether equally specific implicatives in the physiological sphere can be found in other languages.

### 8. The spatio-motoric sphere

Lithuanian has not been mentioned until now as a language particularly rich in specific implicatives, but in fact it has one interesting group of these, viz. a small group of verbs describing the ability to accomplish some action as determined by the ability to overcome certain spatio-motoric limitations, partly determined by bodily predispositions. *Pasiekti* ‘reach’ is one of them:

(45) Lithuanian

*Šalia šaldytuvo buvo stendas, nuo jo*  
 next.to fridge.GEN.SG be.PST.3 stand.NOM.SG from 3.GEN.SG.M  
*pasiekė paimti tris saldainių dėžutes.*  
 reach.PST.3 take.INF three.ACC sweet.GEN.PL box.ACC.SG

‘Next to the fridge there was a stand from which he could reach just far enough to take three boxes of sweets.’<sup>21</sup>

(46)

*Kaire ranka ji ne-pasiekia*  
 left.INS.SG.F hand.INS.SG 3.NOM.SG.F NEG-reach.PRS.3  
*paimti virvės virš kopetėlių,*  
 take.INF rope.GEN.SG above ladder[PL].GEN  
 [*tai neranda kur tos rankos dėti.*]

‘With her left hand she cannot reach far enough to seize the rope above the ladder, [and so she does not find a place to rest her hand].’<sup>22</sup>

We can add *tilpti* ‘have room enough to do something’ (perfective *pratilpti*):

(47) Lithuanian

*Londonė šeštadienį dviaukštis autobusas*  
 London.LOC Saturday.ACC.SG double.decker.NOM.SG.M bus.NOM.SG

21 <http://eteismai.lt/byla/229473676590541/1-111-564/2016>.

22 [forum.speleo.lt/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=1230](http://forum.speleo.lt/viewtopic.php?f=1&t=1230).

*ne-tilpo*                      *pravažiuoti*                      *po*                      *geležinkelio*  
 NEG-have.room.PST.3    drive.through.INF    under    railway.GEN  
*tiltu*                      *ir*                      *kliudė*                      *jo*                      *perdangą.*  
 bridge.INS.SG    and    graze.PST.3    3.GEN.SG.M    deck.ACC.SG  
 ‘Last Saturday in London a double-decker bus proved too high to  
 drive through under a railway bridge and grazed its deck.’<sup>23</sup>

At least one verb also involves motor activity, viz. *pataikyti* ‘hit the mark’:

(48) Lithuanian  
*Tik*    *alaus*                      *skardinių*                      *kai kas*                      *jau*  
 only    beer.GEN.SG    can.GEN.PL    somebody.NOM    PCL  
*ne-pataikė*                      *įmesti*                      *į*                      *šiukšliadėžes.*  
 NEG-hit.the.mark.PST.3    throw.into.INF    into    dustbin.ACC.PL  
 ‘But as to the beer cans, certain people seem to have been unsuccessful  
 in throwing them into the dustbin.’<sup>24</sup>

This use of *pataikyti* is ironical, of course, as the implication is the people referred to didn’t bother to throw their empty cans into a dustbin. But more interesting here is the extended, metaphorical use of *pataikyti*, as in:

(49) Lithuanian  
*Jie*                      *padedą*                      *man*                      *įvertinti,*                      *ar vaikas*  
 3.NOM.PL.M    help.PRS.3    1SG.DAT    assess.INF    if    child.NOM.SG  
*paklaustas,*                      *tik*                      *pataikė*                      *atsakyti*  
 ask.PART.PASS.PST.NOM.SG.M    just    hit.the.mark.PST.3    answer.INF  
 [ar jis iš tiesų suprato pamokos turinį].  
 ‘It [sc. the homework] helps me to assess whether a child just hit  
 upon the correct answer when asked or really understood the content  
 of the lesson.’<sup>25</sup>

Here *pataikyti* means ‘by chance more than understanding, find the right way to do something’. Interesting questions are raised by the

23 <https://www.15min.lt/naujiena/aktualu/pasaulis/londone-dviauksciam-autobusui-kliudzius-tilta-suzeisti-26-zmones-57-701003>.

24 <http://musu.krastas.lt/?rub=1065924812&id=1436194333>.

25 [https://apklausa.lt/f/ar-tevai-padedą-5-8-kl-mokiniams-ruosti-namu-darbus-4y7sjxx/entries/916659/text\\_results](https://apklausa.lt/f/ar-tevai-padedą-5-8-kl-mokiniams-ruosti-namu-darbus-4y7sjxx/entries/916659/text_results).

negated variety *nepataikė atsakyti*, which could be interpreted as ‘answered but not to the point’. This would suggest *pataikyti* is, in this use, no longer implicative but factive. The interpretation of such sentences is not straightforward but such a shift to factive status would not be quite unexpected: as the implicative’s meaning becomes evaluative, the content of the complement clause may cease to be interpreted as being conditional on what is expressed by the complement-taking verb and become a presupposed event subject to evaluation.

A metaphorical extension of the kind found with *pataikyti* is also found with the verb *aprepti*, originally ‘encompass (with the arms)’, which belongs to the same group as *pasiėkti* or *pratilpti*, and indeed also behaves as an implicative complement-taking verb, but seems to be attested only in an extended, metaphorical sense, as ‘manage to cope with a large number of tasks’:

(50) Lithuanian

<i>Valstybinės</i>	<i>miškų</i>	<i>tarnybos</i>	<i>inspektoriai</i> [ ... ]
State.ADJ.GEN.SG	forest.GEN.PL	service.GEN.SG	inspector.NOM.PL
<i>fiziškai</i>	<i>ne-aprepią</i>	<i>priziūrėti</i>	<i>visų</i>
physically	NEG-encompass.PRS.3	supervise.INF	all.GEN.PL
<i>privaciu</i>	<i>miškų.</i>		
private.GEN.PL	forest.GEN.PL		

‘The State forestry inspectors [ ... ] are physically unable to supervise all private forests.’<sup>26</sup>

Interestingly, implicatives in the spatio-motoric domain are also found in Finnish, e.g., *ulottua* ‘reach, manage to reach’ (a counterpart to Lith. *pasiėkti*), and *mahtua* ‘fit into sth, find place enough to do sth’ (a counterpart to Lith. *tilpti*):

(51) Finnish

<i>Hän</i>	<i>ulottui</i>	<i>vaivoin</i>	<i>tarttumaan</i>	<i>pelastusköyteen.</i> <sup>27</sup>
(s)he	reach.PST.3SG	effort.INSTR.PL	catch.INF3.ILL	lifeline.ILL

‘With great effort (s)he managed to catch hold of the lifeline.’

<sup>26</sup> <https://lietuvosdiena.lrytas.lt/aktualijos/popierine-aplinkosaugos-lazda.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.kielitoimistonsanikirja.fi>.

(52)

*Sängyssä mahtui hyvin pyörimään.*  
 bed.INESS.SG fit.into.PST.3SG well roll.about.INF3.ILL  
 ‘One had space enough to roll about in the bed.’<sup>28</sup>

The construction seems to be not quite unknown in Russian:

(53) Russian

[*San’ka provorno zaskočila emu za spinu, pojmla ruku,*]  
*čut’ bylo ne dostala čmoknut’,*  
 hardly FRUSTR NEG reach.PST.F kiss.INF  
 [*da on opjat’ vydernul i ešče popjatilsja.*]  
 ‘[Sanya deftly bolted behind his back, got hold of his hand] and  
 nearly managed to kiss it,  
 [but he withdrew it again and stepped backward].’ (RNC, from Fedor  
 Knorre, 1973)

However, speakers of standard Russian do not readily accept such constructions, and constructions like (53) could be an occasional phenomenon.

Verbs belonging to the group discussed here show a tendency to select clausal complements in other languages as well, but not necessarily with the verb in its original spatio-motoric meaning. The Danish verb *nå* ‘reach’ is also an implicative, but its spatial meaning has evolved into a general meaning of ability and ultimately into the temporal meaning of ‘manage to do something within a certain time frame’:

(54) Danish

*Jeg kan ikke nå bogen på øverste hylde.*  
 I can NEG reach.INF book.DEF on upper shelf  
 ‘I can’t reach the book on the upper shelf.’

(55)

*Desuden nåede de at få et par*  
 moreover have.time.PST they to catch.INF a couple  
*videoapparater under armene, før de stak af.*  
 video.player.PL under arm.PL.DEF before they bolt.PST away

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g189934-d199923-i298153317-Hotel\\_Kamp-Helsinki\\_Uusimaa.html](https://www.tripadvisor.com/LocationPhotoDirectLink-g189934-d199923-i298153317-Hotel_Kamp-Helsinki_Uusimaa.html).

‘They also had time to snatch several video players before they made off.’ (KorpusDK)

To explain the transition we must, however, reconstruct for Danish an original construction analogous to (54), something like:

(56)

\**Han kan ikke nå at få fat i bogen.*  
 he can NEG reach.INF to catch grip in book.DEF  
 intended meaning: ‘He cannot reach (high/far enough) to take the book.’

The shift to more general and abstract meaning can be compared to that observed in Lith. *pataikyti*, discussed above, which means ‘manage to do something in the way required by convention, at the right moment etc.’, or in Lith. *aprėpti*, which has acquired a quantitative meaning. Such extended and metaphorical uses appear regularly, but the specific feature of Finnish and Lithuanian is that they have a small group of spatio-motoric verbs that, as implicative predicates, have remained stable at the spatio-motoric stage instead of moving on to more abstract meanings, although these also arise and co-exist with the more concrete ones. The Finnish-Lithuanian convergence (perhaps extending to Slavic) is interesting, though it is not clear whether we are dealing with an areal feature.

## 9. Time frames as obstacles

Several languages have specialized implicative verbs describing a situation in which a person succeeds in performing a task in spite of being pressed for time. Danish *nå* has already been mentioned. Lithuanian has a verb of the same type:

(57) Lithuanian

[*Lietingą naktį vairuotojas, išvydęs žmogų kelyje,*]  
*ne-spėjo sustabdyti automobilio*  
 NEG-be.in.time.PST.3 stop.INF automobile.GEN.SG

‘[During this rainy night the driver, having seen a person on the road,] did not manage to stop his vehicle in time.’<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/crime/lietinga-nakti-vairuotojas-isvydes-zmogus-kelyje-nespejo-sustabdyti-automobilio.d?id=71813200>.

Though we can describe ‘lack of time’ as an obstacle to be surmounted (analogous to lack of space in the case of *tilpti* above), it seems verbs of the type dealt with in this section are prone to extended uses in which the implicative verb ceases to give an internal characterization of the situation and shifts to temporal location of the event with regard to other events, thus performing a function close to that of phasal adverbs. Cf. (58), where *nesuspėjo pagauti* means as much as ‘have not yet got hold of Father Christmas’:

(58) Lithuanian

*Tad jei dar yra tokių, kurie*  
 so if still be.PRS.3 such.GEN.PL REL.NOM.PL.M  
*ne-suspėjo pagauti Kalėdų senelio,*  
 NEG-be.in.time.PST.3 catch.INF Xmas[PL].GEN old.man.GEN.SG  
 [dar turit galimybę pasitaisyti.]

‘If there are still those among you who haven’t been able to get hold of Father Christmas, [‘you can still make up for this].’<sup>30</sup>

The same is observed in Finnish, which has three verbs for this meaning: *ehitiä*, *keritä* and *ennättää*:

(59) Finnish

*Jos joku ei ole vielä ehtinyt*  
 if anybody NEG.3SG be yet be.in.time.PART.PST  
*tilaamaan Eurosport Playeria,*  
 order.INF3.ILL Eurosport Player.PRT.SG  
 [niin tästä linkistä saa palvelun kuukaudeksi.]

‘If anybody has not yet ordered Eurosport Player, [over this link one can get access for a month.]’<sup>31</sup>

Finally, parallels are also found in Slavic (cf. Russian *uspet’*, Polish *zdążyć*), both in the original sense of ‘obstacle’ and in the temporal-location sense. Could this be an areal feature?

Only Lithuanian seems to have a reverse implicative counterpart *pavėluoti*, meaning ‘be late’:

30 <https://www.fashyas.com/XX/Unknown/188783921491895/Andra-Accessories>.

31 <https://keskustelu.jatko aika.com/threads/olympialaiset-2018-pyeongchang.58011/page-48> (a post from 14.02.2018).

## (60) Lithuanian

*Keliavo ketvertas linksmi, kol vienoje*  
 travel.PST.3 foursome.NOM.SG merrily until one.LOC.SG.F  
*stotyje Rojas pavėlavo įlipti į traukinį.*  
 station.LOC.SG PN.NOM be.late.PST.3 go.aboard.INF into train.ACC.SG  
 ‘The four of them travelled happily on, until at one of the stations Roy  
 came too late to board the train.’<sup>32</sup>

This verb, however, is not consistently implicative. The negated counterpart of (60), *nepavėlavo įlipti*, would imply the subject caught the train. Often, however, *pavėluoti* does not refer to being late as an obstacle to the accomplishment of an action, but expresses an evaluation of an event as having occurred, subjectively, too late. This is seen in (61):

## (61) Lithuanian

*Jis jau pavėlavo pasakyti šiuos*  
 3.NOM.SG.M already be.late.PST.3 say.INF DEM.ACC.PL.F  
*žodžius.*  
 word.ACC.PL  
 [Aš netikiu jo nuoširdumu.]  
 ‘He was late in saying those words. [I don’t believe in his sincerity.]’<sup>33</sup>

Here, from inverse implicative the verb becomes evaluative, which could perhaps explain why it can become factive, in the same way as *pataikyti* in (49). In any case, these two verbs suggest there the borderline between implicatives and factives is sometimes fuzzy, which deserves to be examined in greater detail.

## 10. In conclusion

This brief and very incomplete comparison between three languages of Northern Europe, among which one – Finnish – has been mentioned in the literature as being rich in implicatives, was intended to gain more insight in the general properties of this lexical class, and also to get a very preliminary idea of typological variety in this domain.

32 <https://zmones.lrytas.lt/tv-antena/2007/03/17/news/nuotykiiai-sibiro-eksprese-4984208>.

33 <http://www.lrytas.lt/pasaulis/ivykiai/turku-fotografas-apie-protestus-salyje-zmones-yra-pasirenge-kovoti-iki-galo.htm>.

As Karttunen notes, implicatives usually imply that a certain obstacle has to be surmounted in order for the subject to bring about a certain event. The presence of obstacles to be surmounted as a presupposition associated with the use of implicative verbs is a convenient point of departure for a general characterization of implicatives, but certain groups of implicatives are prone to shifts of different types according to the semantic group to which the implicative belongs. In a general way, we can describe these shifts as instances of subjectification. As what should count as an obstacle is often a matter of subjective evaluation, the path to subjectification is open to virtually all implicatives, though in some cases the subjectified use is felt to be ironical, as in *He managed to offend half of the electorate*, etc. Whereas for verbs like ‘manage’ in their most basic sense it is an object of controversy whether the implicative makes a truth-conditional contribution or not, it is clear that there is no such contribution in the case of subjectified implicatives: here the sole difference is in the speaker’s evaluation.

The subjectified reading of implicatives consists, in most cases, in an evaluation of a person’s behaviour in terms of social conventions, ethical standards etc. In some cases, the evaluative element is lacking: verbs like Finnish *ehtiä*, Lithuanian *spėti* may simply express relative location in a time-scale, while Lithuanian *aprėpti* in (50) has shifted to a quantitative characterization. But in such cases as well, a process of subjectification is at work.

Our exploration confirms that languages may differ with regard to the degree of differentiation and specificity of meanings in the implicative domain. The non-specific implicatives may show occasional gaps in individual languages, but these are not of broader interest. More general tendencies manifest themselves where a language has a semantic class of specific implicatives lacking in other languages. Both Lithuanian and Finnish show instances of this. The spatio-motoric group looks like an interesting Finnish-Lithuanian convergence – could it be an areal feature? Finnish *tarjeta* ‘feel warm enough (to do something)’ points to the existence of a ‘physiological’ group, though we have as yet found no more examples. The Finnish-Lithuanian convergence with regard to the spatio-motoric type suggests that areal patterns might perhaps be discerned. The present cross-linguistic study was highly selective, the choice of languages being determined by the authors’ linguistic expertise. A broader investigation on implicatives in European languages would no doubt yield more trustworthy and revealing results. But we



can already discern some common tendencies, some differences and some interesting lines of future research.

### Sources

KorpusDK – Danish Language Corpus, <https://ordnet.dk/korpusdk>.

RNC – Russian National Corpus, <http://www.ruscorpora.ru>.

### Abbreviations

ABL – ablative, ACC – accusative, ADJ – adjective, DAT – dative,  
 DEF – definite, DEM – demonstrative, ELAT – elative, ESS – essive,  
 F – feminine, FRUSTR – frustrative, GEN – genitive, ILL – illative,  
 INESS – inessive, INF – infinitive, INF<sub>3</sub> – third infinitive (Finnish),  
 INS – instrumental, INSTR – instructive, LOC – locative, M – masculine,  
 NEG – negative, NOM – nominative, PART – participle, PCL – particle,  
 PFX – prefix, PFV – perfective, PL – plural, PN – personal name,  
 PRS – present, PRT – partitive, PST – past, REL – relative,  
 REFL – reflexive, SG – singular, TRANS – transitive

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