

# The Latvian continuative construction *runāt vienā runāšanā* ‘talk in one talking’ = ‘keep talking’

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Latvian may express continuative aspect by means of a complex construction which consists of a verb and a locative phrase headed by an action noun from the same verb. The construction is productive and attested with a variety of durative verbs. Salient exemplars are some verbs of talking and crying. In a clause the construction most often is treated in the same way as simple verb forms. Formally and functionally the construction is related to three other cognate constructions in Latvian as well as to iteration of the type *talk and talk*. However, in these other constructions continuative meaning arises only as an implicature or contains more specific nuances. It is proposed that cognate constructions may form a link between morphological reduplication and syntactic iteration.

**Keywords:** Continuative aspect, cognate construction, figura etymologica, iteration, reduplication, action noun

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

The object of this study is a Latvian construction that expresses an ongoing, uninterrupted action or process. Its form is illustrated in (1).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> All examples, if not otherwise indicated, come from the corpus lvTenTen14.

- (1) [otrajā rītā mans omulīgais bērns bija pārvērties,]  
 raudāja vien-ā raudā-šan-ā  
 cry.PST.3 one-LOC.SG cry-ACN-LOC.SG  
 ‘[the next morning my cheerful baby had completely changed:]  
 (s/he) was crying incessantly’

The construction consists of a verb *V* and an adverbial phrase in the locative containing an action noun from the same verb and the modifier *viens* ‘one’. The schema of this construction thus is *V vienā V-šanā*. The meaning of the construction is CONTINUATIVE as defined by Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca (1994, 127): a dynamic situation is ongoing (= progressive meaning) and “the agent of the action is deliberately keeping the action going”.

In contemporary Latvian, the construction is found mainly in colloquial registers and its frequency is not high. In the balanced ten-million-word corpus LVK2018 there are only eight instances, all from fiction. My study is therefore based on the corpus lVTenTen14, which has been compiled from Internet resources and contains more colloquial texts, besides being larger than LVK2018. The 129 examples found there provide excellent material for analysing the meaning and usage of the construction. Methods of data gathering are explained in Section 3.

The construction is mentioned in grammars of Latvian (Endzelin 1923, 445; MLLVG II, 1962, 42–43; LVG2013, 355), but has never been described in detail. A reason for this neglect may be the problem of giving it a label and determining its place in a description of Latvian as well as in relation to constructions in other languages. It is to a certain degree idiomatic, but it is not restricted to individual lexemes and thus cannot be found in dictionaries. The meaning of continuous action is aspectual, but it does not belong to the obligatory grammatical distinctions made in Latvian. Besides, the construction differs formally from those expression types on which traditional grammars focus: inflectional or derivational morphological categories, periphrastic verb forms or auxiliaries. In grammars of Latvian, the construction is not mentioned in chapters on verbal categories, but in the chapter on uses of the locative. It will be argued that this is not the best place, as the locative contributes less to the meaning of the whole than other components of the construction.

By its meaning, the Latvian construction can be compared to continuative grams which occur in various forms cross-linguistically. As Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca (1994, 164) note, such grams are not frequently found

in the languages of the world (or maybe more precisely, in their descriptive grammars), and still today the literature on them is scarce. By its form, the Latvian continuative construction belongs to the large family of constructions involving repetition of linguistic material, ranging from morphological reduplication to syntactic iteration of verb forms. It is by no means rare that these two aspects are combined: with verbs, various kinds of repetition are often associated with ongoing actions and can come to express grammatical categories such as progressive, iterative, frequentative, or continuative (see also the recent literature on pluractionality, for example, Mattioli 2017; 2019; Müller & Sanchez-Mendes, forthcoming).

While morphological reduplication is readily accepted by linguists as a grammatical device, repetition across word boundaries is often regarded as only a stylistic technique. The Latvian construction, which is too conspicuous to go unnoticed, is surely part of the stylistic repertoire of creative language users. As an example, consider the following extract from a humorous story by Mark Twain, where a man is haunted by a jingle he read in a newspaper in the morning and cannot get out of his head. This story from 1876 was translated into Latvian by two young poets (one of them the future national poet Rainis, then still publishing under his real name Pliekšāns) and published in 1888.

- (2) Mark Twain (1876), *Punch, brothers, punch!* and Jānis Pliekšāns & Pēteris Stučka (1888), *Šur un tur, it nekur* (Pēc Marka Twena)
- a) *I returned home, and **suffered** all the afternoon; **suffered** all through an unconscious and unrefreshing dinner; **suffered**, and cried, and jingled all through the evening;*
- Es gāju atkal mājās un **kamājos** cauru priekšpusdienu; **kamājos** kā mašīna, bez prieka ēzdams; **kamājos** un kunkstēju un bimbinažu visu mīļu vakaru;*
- b) *went to bed and rolled, tossed, and jingled right along, the same as ever;*
- (3) Latvian translation of (2b)
- |                              |              |                             |                           |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>gāju</i>                  | <i>gulēt</i> | <i>un</i>                   | <b><i>valstījos</i></b> , |
| go.PST.1SG                   | sleep.INF    | and                         | toss.PST.1SG.RFL          |
| <i>spārdījos</i>             | <i>un</i>    | <b><i>bimbinažos</i></b>    | <i>vienā</i>              |
| kick.ITER.PST.1SG.RFL        | and          | jingle.PST.1SG.RFL          | one.LOC                   |
| <b><i>valstī-šan-ā</i></b> , | <i>vienā</i> | <b><i>bimbina-šan-ā</i></b> |                           |
| toss-ACN-LOC                 | one.LOC      | jingle-ACN-LOC              |                           |
- 'I went to sleep and turned and kicked around and jingled all the time'

In (2a) we see repetition as a stylistic device (parallelism) in both languages: the same verb is used in three following clauses. In addition, both languages use lexical means to emphasise the continuity and duration of the situation (and, as a side effect, display a negative stance of the narrator): English *all the afternoon, all through*, Latvian *cauru priekšpusdienu* ‘[all] through the morning’, *visu mīlu vakaru* ‘all through the evening’ (literally “the whole dear evening”). In (2b) the English original does not contain repetition, but uses again lexical devices (*right along, the same as ever*), which in the Latvian translation in (3) are replaced by the continuative construction, here together with the original accumulation of verbs, which makes it more intricate than when it appears in ordinary language.

While I do not dispute the stylistic value of the construction, it is important to remember that being used as a stylistic device does not prevent a construction from becoming grammatical. On the contrary: it may be the precondition. This insight was formulated almost a century ago by Leo Spitzer, who maintained that all grammar is frozen style<sup>3</sup> (Maas 2007, 12).

The goal of this article is to analyse the form and the usage of the continuative construction in contemporary informal written Latvian as represented in the corpus. In this way the paper contributes to the description of the category of continuativity, which is insufficiently investigated in the languages of the world. Another goal is to initiate research on cognate-construction phenomena (ccs) in Baltic languages, and more generally to put research on cognate constructions into the context of syntactic reduplication and constructions as grammatical devices.

Questions I seek to answer include the following:

- How does the continuative meaning come about, and what is the role of the individual elements that make up the construction?
- How regular and productive is the construction, how fixed vs. variable with respect to its components?
- What distinguishes the continuative construction from other means which include some form of repetition and may have similar meanings?

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Köller (2007, 1215) from a reprint of Spitzer’s article, originally published in 1925, as follows: “Alle Neuerung geht vom schöpferischen Einzelnen aus, *nihil est in syntaxi quod non fuerit in stylo*. Syntax, ja Grammatik sind nichts als gefrorene Stilistik”.

In Section 2 I discuss the components of the construction against the background of similar constructions in other languages. Section 3 presents and discusses formal, lexical and semantic aspects of the construction as represented in the corpus, and in Section 4 I turn to other Latvian constructions with repetition of a verbal root.

## 2. The composition of the construction in cross-linguistic comparison

The construction investigated belongs to what has traditionally been called tautology or, more precisely, *figura etymologica*—a construction containing two instances of the same root. Instead of this Latin expression, I will use the term COGNATE CONSTRUCTION (CC), which fits more easily into an English text. Cognate constructions are well attested in Baltic languages. They have been described mainly as stylistic devices, especially within folksongs (for Latvian see Ozols 1961, 393–405, who however does not mention the construction investigated here). Noteworthy is Range’s study of Lithuanian cognate-object constructions of the type *darbą dirbti* ‘work a work’, *miegą miegoti* ‘sleep a sleep’, *dūmą dūmoti* ‘think a thought’ in folk songs (Range 1976; 1977). Though carried out manually with printed or hand-written sources, Range’s study is very similar to modern corpus studies in its methodology: it is strictly based on a corpus, considers the entire material within this corpus (instead of selected examples, as typical for earlier studies), distinguishes type and token frequencies, and points out collocates.

Cognate-object constructions in other languages have intrigued linguists of different persuasions especially with respect to the status of the cognate object and how to capture it in diverse frameworks. As always, most research has been done on English; additionally one finds studies on Russian or Romance languages, more rarely on languages from outside of Europe.<sup>4</sup> Cognate objects have been found in many languages to be more like adverbials, even if they have the form of a direct object. The Arabic cognate accusative is traditionally interpreted as an adverb, a part-of-speech almost

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<sup>4</sup> To cite just a few, rather randomly selected works which I have looked at: Pereltsvaig (1999); Sailer (2010); Kim & Lim (2012); Melloni & Masini (2017); Kari (2017).

absent as a lexical class in Arabic (Alhawary 2011, 169–172). The accusative is here marked on a true verbal noun (the Arabic *MASDAR*): *ḍaraba-hu: ḍarban* literally ‘he hit him a hitting’ (not ‘a hit’), and the main meanings of the construction are 1. ‘he hit him violently’ (intensified action), 2. ‘he hit him indeed, truly, for sure’ (emphasising the statement) (Maas 2007, 17; Alhawary 2011; Yasin 2014). In the Latvian construction investigated here, the cognate verbal noun is in the locative, a case typically used for adverbials. While there are verbs that govern a locative in Latvian, there seems to be no ground to treat the action noun in the construction as a cognate *object*. The syntactic status of this verbal noun is however of minor importance for my purpose. Frajzyngier & Johnston (2011, 169) describe as “cognate adverb” a construction in the Chadic language Mina which is formed with a preposition and the stem of the verb in the predicate: *misil-é í misil* ‘stole by stealing’ = ‘stole indeed’;<sup>5</sup> see also Melloni & Masini (2017) for Italian constructions with cognate accusatives and with cognate prepositional phrases. The Latvian construction can thus be regarded as an instance of the cross-linguistically well-attested family of cognate object/adverbial constructions. A Latvian cognate construction which contains accusative marking will be briefly discussed in Section 4.

In a broader context, cognate objects and adverbs are instances of syntactic, or word-external, reduplication (Maas 2007; Hurch *et al.* 2008; Erelt 1997 gives a thorough overview of reduplication in Estonian, which is almost always of the word-external type). Typical examples of syntactic reduplication are constructions where the same word is repeated. This type is more often called *REPETITION*, to distinguish it from morphological *REDUPLICATION*; a less common term is *ITERATION* (Stolz 2006). Using the latter term has the advantage that *repetition* can be used in a non-technical sense or as a cover term for various kinds of techniques where linguistic material is repeated.

Scholars often emphasise the difference between (morphological) reduplication and other types of repetition, though the exact nature of the difference is a matter of debate. As several criteria are involved in the

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<sup>5</sup> I extracted this phrase from the example given by Frajzyngier and Johnston and gave it my own translation, based on their description of the meaning as “to confirm somebody’s presupposition” (Frajzyngier & Johnston 2011, 169).

distinction, there may be also phenomena that cannot be clearly put into one of these boxes (Gil 2005). In a recent contribution to this question, Stolz & Levkovych (2018) argue that the decisive criterion is grammaticality: REDUPLICATION is a means for the expression of grammatical categories, while REPETITION (ITERATION) is used for pragmatic tasks such as signaling speaker involvement. Related to this, reduplication “is equipped with fixed construction frames which are associated with meanings of their own and often are of a grammatical nature” (Stolz & Levkovych 2018, 59). This criterion puts cognate constructions, which definitely are equipped with such frames, closer to reduplication than to iteration. Some distinguishing features of cognate constructions and iteration in Latvian will be discussed in Section 4.

Apart from the shared formal feature of repeating linguistic material, the three types (iteration, reduplication, and cognate constructions) also show some functional similarities. Similar ranges of meaning have been found with both reduplication and iteration. The meaning of continued action, “keep V-ing” is among the attested meanings of morphological reduplication (Moravcsik 1978; Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994, 165; Kajitani 2010; Rubino 2013), and the iteration of verbs (predicates) also may have this effect (Stolz 2006; Stefanowitsch 2007). The Latvian continuative construction fits well into this pattern, and we may suspect that the meaning of continued action partly stems from the repetitive nature of the construction.

However, this is only one part of the story. Following the main verb, there is not just a cognate noun, but a phrase with three features that deserve attention: (i) its head is an action noun, (ii) it is in the locative, (iii) it contains the word *viens* ‘one, single’. Let’s look at each feature in turn to determine their contribution to the meaning of the whole.

The action noun with the suffix *-šan-* is a completely regular and productive form that can be derived from any verb (cf. Nau 2015; 2016). As remarked already by Bielenstein (1863), Latvian uses this form (as well as the regular agent noun with the suffix *-ēj/tāj-*) very frequently and in various constructions:

Der Lette liebt es sehr gewisse Substantiv-Bildungen anzuwenden, wo der Deutsche das Verbum setzen muss oder setzt. (Bielenstein 1863, 258)  
 ‘Latvians love to use certain nominal derivations in places where Germans must put or do put a verb.’

Bielenstein does not mention the continuative construction here, but he states that the action noun is used “um die Dauer der Handlung mehr hervorzuheben, als mittelst des Verbum möglich ist” (‘to highlight the duration of the action more than is possible by using a [finite] verb’) (Bielenstein 1863, 259). This seems to be an expression of the nowadays well-known general finding that notions expressed by nouns are more time-stable than that expressed by (finite) verbs. It is however not the case that Latvian constructions with nominalisations always have some kind of durative meaning.

In contemporary Latvian, action nouns are often used as core arguments and as complements of prepositions (see Nau 2015 for details and differences across registers). With certain prepositions, they function similarly to converbs (for example, *bez V-šanas* ‘without V-ing’, *pirms V-šanas* ‘before V-ing’). Some uses with an existential verb are more or less idiomatic. More idiomatic are, for example, *ir teikšana* (+ dative): *viņai ir teikšana* ‘she has a say’, or *Tā man pirmā dzirdēšana* ‘I am hearing this for the first time’, ‘I didn’t know that’ (literally: ‘this is a first hearing to me’). These expressions are documented in dictionaries. Holvoet (2004) has drawn attention to a construction with a modal meaning: with the existential verb and (not obligatory) a possessor, the action noun may express a possibility, or, as it often appears with negation, lack of possibility. This construction was more productive in the past, while in contemporary Latvian it is rare. Most often it is found with the verb *palikt* ‘stay’ and semantically close verbs such as *dzīvot* ‘live’. It seems that it has lost its productivity and become idiomatic with a few possible verbs. Only very few examples such as (4) and (5) could be found in the large corpus lvTenTen14.

- (4) *Kur*            *ir*                    *garantija,*                    *ka*            *manis*  
 where        be.PRS.3        guarantee.NOM.SG        that        1SG.GEN  
*izaudzinātajiem*                    *jauniešiem*                    *šeit*  
 rear.PST.PP.DAT.PL.M.DEF        young[NOUN].DAT.PL        here  
***būs***                    ***palikšana,***  
 be.FUT.3            stay.ACN.NOM.SG

[*ka viņi varēs normāli strādāt un atkal audzināt savus sīkos. Nekāda.*]

‘Where is the guarantee that the young people I brought up **will**

**(be able to) stay** here, [that they will be able to work normally and in turn raise their young. There is none.] (literally: ‘that there will be a staying for [them]’)



- (5) [*Es gan došos uz Rīgu. Tu redzēsi, te tu tikai atkal saaukstēsies*]  
*Jūrmalā vairs nav dzīvošanas.*  
 Jūrmala.LOC.SG more NEG.be.PRS.3 live.ACN.GEN.SG  
 ‘[I for my part will go to Riga. You’ll see, you will only get another cold here.]  
 One **cannot live** in Jūrmala anymore.’ (“In Jūrmala there is no living  
 anymore.”)

In the negated variant this Latvian construction is reminiscent of a German construction, which equally is somewhat outdated, but still attested: *hier war keines Bleibens für ihn* ‘he could not stay here’, literally ‘there was no staying for him here’, *es war kein Reden* ‘there was no (possibility for) talking’. In these German constructions, as well as in contemporary Latvian examples with *ir palikšana*, the modal meaning is weak.

Given the variety of constructions with the Latvian action noun, it seems doubtful that this form alone could trigger a continuative meaning. A better candidate may be the use of the locative case. Since Bielenstein<sup>6</sup> (1863), Latvian grammars have mentioned the continuous construction in the section discussing the functions of the locative. Endzelin (1923, 445, referring to Mühlenbach’s contribution to their joint work of 1907) uses the term “AUSMALENDER” LOKATIV, which is rendered in Latvian as TĒLOJAMAIS LOKATĪVS (MLLVG II, 42) and may be translated as FIGURATIVE LOCATIVE.

Locative marking is a cross-linguistically well-known source for continuous and progressive aspect (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994, 129–131; Heine & Kuteva 2002, 202–203; Mair 2012). More precisely, it is a locative marker together with a copular verb that develops into a continuous construction. In Finnish, there is a conventionalised progressive construction consisting of the copula or existential verb *olla* ‘be’ and the main verb in the form of the *ma*-infinitive with inessive marking (see Sulkala & Karjalainen 1992, 310; Heinämäki 1995; Tommola 2000; Onikki-Rantajääskö 2006).

- (6) Finnish (Onikki-Rantajääskö 2006, 81; new glossing)  
*Hän on metsästä-mä-ssä.*  
 3SG(NOM) be.PRS.3 hunt-INF-INE  
 ‘S/he is hunting.’

<sup>6</sup> Maybe even earlier; I did not check older grammars.

It is easy to imagine that Latvian might have developed a similar progressive construction with the locative of the action noun, especially as it shares with Finnish a regular metonymy where being at or going to a (work) place is interpreted as performing or going to perform an action (of the kind ‘to be in/go into the berries’ = ‘to be/go picking berries’; for Finnish see Onikki-Rantajääskö 2006). However, this is not what happened: a construction *būt medišanā* with the meaning of progressive ‘be hunting’ does not exist in Latvian. One reason may be that, as shown in Nau (2016), the action noun of transitive verbs is oriented towards P (the patient), not A (the agent). Thus, a Latvian clause formally mirroring the Finnish example in (6) would probably be interpreted not as ‘s/he is hunting’, but as ‘s/he is hunted’. Compare *būt meklēšanā* ‘be searched for’, ‘be wanted (by the police)’ (*meklēt* ‘search’); *būt pārdošanā* ‘be on sale’ (*pārdot* ‘sell’).

Finnish also has a continuative construction which resembles the Latvian one in that it contains a verbal noun, formed with the suffix *-mis-* (nominative *-minen*). This construction does not use a local case, but the partitive, which makes the action nominal look like an object.

- (7) Finnish (Sulkala & Karjalainen 1992, 310; new glossing)

<i>Marja</i>	<i>juoksi</i>	<i>juokse-mis-ta-an</i>
Marja	run.PST.3SG	run-ACN-PRT-3POSS
‘Marja ran and ran.’		

Formally, the Finnish construction is closer to another Latvian cognate construction discussed below in Section 4 (V (*savu*) V-*mo*), as the literal translation of (7) is ‘Marja ran her running’. This other Latvian construction is not a conventional means for continuative aspect; its meaning is vaguer. Such is also the situation in Estonian, where an equivalent to the Finnish construction is less grammaticalised (Erelt 1997, 26; Pilvik 2017, 316). An Estonian example will be given below in (38). In Estonian dialects also other cognate constructions are found, which may have a continuative or intensifying meaning (Pilvik 2017, 316). They use various prepositions, but not a local case.

So how does the Latvian action noun in the locative become part of a continuative construction? A crucial element of the construction treated here is the word *viens* ‘one, a single’. The combination *vienā V-šanā* ‘in one V-ing’ is firmly associated with the meaning of continuous action,

or the repetition of many instances of one activity within a given time. Apart from the cognate construction, it appears in a set of closely related patterns:

- (a) (BE) *vienā V-šanā* (8)
- (b) TIME ('day', 'week', ...) PASSES *vienā V-šanā* (9)
- (c) SPEND TIME *vienā V-šanā*

In the first two patterns a person affected may be added as a free dative, but in (a) it may also appear as a subject in the nominative. There are no clear borders between these patterns, as verbs may be omitted and in all types a time span is often referred to in some form. I will therefore treat them as representing one construction.

- (8) *abiem pirmais gads b / d, ta*  
 both.DAT first.NOM.SG.M year.NOM.SG kindergarten PTC  
*nu vienā slimošanā*  
 PTC one.LOC.SG be\_ill.ACN.LOC.SG  
 'For both it is the first year in kindergarten, so [they are] constantly ill.'

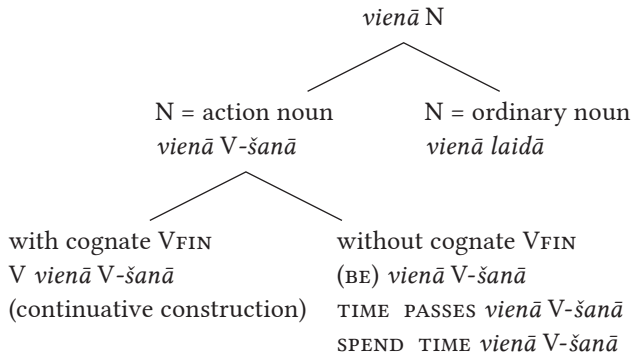
- (9) *Kad braucu prom, man pirmās*  
 when go.PRS.1SG away 1SG.DAT first.NOM.PL.F  
*četras dienas paiet vienā raudāšanā.*  
 four.NOM.F day.NOM.PL pass.PRS.3 one.LOC.SG cry.ACN.LOC.SG  
 'When I go away, I cry nonstop for the first four days.'  
 ("my first four days pass in one crying")

The word *viens* 'one' is also found in combination with other nouns in adverbial expressions meaning 'all the time, incessantly'. In contemporary standard Latvian, the most frequent of these combinations is the idiomatic expression *vienā laidā* (10; also in 13 below). The noun *laida* is not used otherwise in modern Latvian; in the dictionary ME its meaning is listed as 'row, line'.

- (10) *pirms pāris dienām biju tādā bedrē...*  
 before couple day.DAT.PL be.PST.1SG such.LOC.SG pit.LOC.SG  
*raudāju vienā laidā.*  
 cry.PST.1SG one.LOC.SG row.LOC.SG  
 'some days ago I had a kind of depression... I was crying nonstop.'

We may draw a family tree of constructions expressing continuous, uninterrupted activity, as in (11).

- (11) A family tree of Latvian constructions expressing ‘incessantly, nonstop’



In some situations, the three constructions are synonymous (cf. examples (9) and (10); in both, the words in bold may be exchanged by *raudāju vienā raudāšanā*). However, as I will show in Section 3, there are certain features that distinguish them and that prove that the continuative construction *V vienā V-šanā* is less idiomatic and more grammatical than the other two constructions.

In older or regional varieties of Latvian, other nouns besides *laida* ‘row, line’ can be found in combination with *viens* ‘one’ in the meaning ‘incessantly’, for example *vienā gabalā* ‘in one piece’, also in the accusative *vienu gabalu*. These constructions have parallels in German as well as in Finnic languages that are areally close to Latvian: Livonian and Estonian. In German we find varieties of ‘in one N’ as adverbial expressions meaning ‘incessantly’: *in einem fort*, *in einer Tour* ‘in one tour’, *in einem Stück* ‘in one piece’. Parallels between Latvian, Livonian and Estonian, including the construction ‘in one piece’, were described by Wälchli (1996, 256–257). He draws attention to the fact that words and idioms with a meaning ‘always, all the time’ in these languages often involve the word ‘one’ (also in Latvian *vienmēr* ‘always’), while in Lithuanian and neighbouring Slavic languages they involve the word ‘all’ (Lithuanian *visada* ‘always’ < *visas* ‘all’, Russian *vsegda* < *vse* ‘all’).

There are fewer parallels to the use of ‘one’ in a construction with an action noun or other nominalisation. In Lithuanian, we find a close parallel to the Latvian pattern without cognate verb. Lithuanian uses the genitive and not the locative in this construction, for example *vaikas (yra) vien-o rėk-im-o* ‘the child (is) one-GEN cry-ACN-GEN’ = ‘the child is cry-

ing non-stop'. Among the examples from Estonian dialects given by Erelt (1997) or Pilvik (2017), there is only one containing the word 'one' (*vesi juusk ütte juuskmist*, literally 'the water ran **one** running' = 'the water kept running'; Erelt 1997, 26); interestingly, this example comes from the dialect of Karksi near the border with Latvia.

In the Latvian constructions with *vienā -šanā* (and the Lithuanian construction with *vieno -imo*) 'one' does not refer to a single instance of an activity, but to a number of individual instances which however are pictured as making up one constant activity. Such a use of 'one' can also be found in other European languages, where they however typically seem to involve the addition of 'all', for example Italian<sup>7</sup> *era un piangere* 'it was a crying' = 'there was continuous crying', more frequent, or more clearly continuative: *era tutto un piangere* 'it was all a crying'. An interesting parallel without 'all' can be found in a German construction with the adjective *einzig* 'single, one' and a deverbal noun derived with the prefix *ge-*. This colloquial construction is used mostly with iterative or intensive verbs. In (12) I give an example from the corpus deTenTen13:

- (12) German (*Gekraksel* = *Gekraxel* < *kraxeln* 'climb slowly, with difficulty')
- |                 |                  |            |               |
|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| <i>Die</i>      | <i>Wanderung</i> | <i>war</i> | <i>ein</i>    |
| def.NOM.SG.F    | hike             | be.PST.3SG | IDEF.NOM.SG.N |
| <i>einziges</i> | <i>Gekraksel</i> |            |               |
| single.NOM.SG.N | PFX.scramble     |            |               |
- Literally: 'The hike was a single scrambling' = 'The hike was all scrambling', 'We were scrambling nonstop on the hike'

Just like the Latvian construction with *vienā V-šanā*, the German construction often has a negative connotation.

It is interesting that the closer parallels to the Latvian continuative construction in Lithuanian and in areally close languages—the Finnish continuative construction as in (7), similar Estonian constructions, and the German construction *ein einziges Ge-V* as in (12)—do not use a local case or preposition. Also in Latvian the meaning of the construction cannot be attributed to a metaphor or metonymy involving a spatial source. The locative has another function here. What was called FIGURATIVE LOCATIVE

<sup>7</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the Italian example. She/he did not mention the relative frequency of the use of 'all', for which I take responsibility.

(*ausmalender Lokativ, tēlojamais lokatīvs*) by Endzelins and Mühlenbach, Bielenstein (1863) singled out as a meaning of the locative that he characterised as qualitative, answering the question ‘how?’:

[der Lokativ wird gebraucht]

- 5) auf die Frage: wie? oft wenn das Subst. stamm- oder sinnverwandt mit dem Verb. ist, nur zur Verstärkung des Verbalbegriffs, cf. *augumā augt*, schnell wachsen; *lielā lūgšanā lūgties*, mit grossem Flehen bitten; *grūtā nāvē nomirt*, eines schweren Todes sterben; [...] (Bielenstein 1863, 274; Latvian examples adjusted to current orthography)

‘[the locative is used]

- 5) answering the question: how? often when the noun is cognate or semantically related to the verb; only to emphasise the concept of the verb.’

[Bielenstein’s examples with his interpretation, my segmenting and glossing:]

*aug-um-ā aug-t* (grow-VN-LOC grow-INF) ‘grow quickly’

*liel-ā lūg-šan-ā lūg-ties* (big-LOC beg-ACN-LOC beg-INF.RFL)

‘to beg imploringly’

*grūt-ā nāv-ē no-mir-t* (hard-LOC death-LOC PVB-die-INF)

‘to die a difficult death’

All later comprehensive grammars of Latvian contain a paragraph similar to this in their section on the uses of the locative (Endzelin 1923, 445; MLLVG II, 1962, 42–43; LVG2013, 355). The examples they give belong in fact to two different cognate constructions: the type *augumā augt* (with a deverbal noun with the suffix *-um-*), which is largely idiomatic in contemporary Latvian, and the type with the action noun with the suffix *-šan-*. In Bielenstein’s example the word *viens* ‘one’ is missing, but examples in later grammars have it, and the newest comprehensive Latvian grammar describes the construction very explicitly:

Lietvārdam lokatīvā ir stilistiska pastiprinājuma nozīme, ja tas nostājas aiz tās pašas saknes darbības vārda [...] Izsakot ilgstošu, intensīvu darbību, blakus izteicēja vārdam nereti lieto tās pašas saknes lietvārdu lokatīvā kopā ar skaitļa vārdu *viens* [...]. (LVG2013, 355; examples omitted)

‘A noun in the locative has a stylistic meaning of intensification if it follows a verb with the same root [...] Expressing a long, intensive action, one frequently uses alongside the verb of the predicate a cognate noun in the locative together with the numeral *viens* ‘one’ [...].’

I conclude that the Latvian continuative construction consists of two parts: a verb *V* and the phrase *vienā V-šanā*. While the second part alone

already conveys a meaning of continuity and/or repetition of one and the same action, this meaning is additionally indicated by the repetition of the same verb in both parts. This technique makes it possible to link the continuity meaning more firmly to the predicate expressing the activity, and as a result the construction expresses the aspectual category continuative.

### 3. Corpus findings

In this section I investigate in detail the occurrences of the continuative construction in the corpus lvTenTen14. This corpus was compiled from Internet resources and automatically tagged for parts-of-speech and morphological categories. It contains 530.4 million word forms and can be accessed within the platform Sketch Engine (sketchengine.eu).

The continuous construction was extracted by searching for the combination *vienā V-šanā* ‘in one V-ing’, which yielded 312 instances. From these, 129 examples of the cognate construction were obtained by manual filtering. Of the rest, the largest group (140 instances) represents one of the patterns described in Section 2 ((BE) *vienā V-šanā*, TIME PASSES *vienā V-šanā*, SPEND TIME *vienā V-šanā*). As said above, these patterns will be treated as one construction, which is a kind of “sister construction” to the continuative construction (see the family tree in (11)). These two constructions together make up 86% of the occurrences of the string *vienā V-šanā* (269 of 312), which means that this combination is very much associated with the meaning of continued activity. In the remaining 43 instances, *viens* was used in its base meaning ‘one’ and reference was made to one instance of V-ing, for example, *vienā barošānā* ‘at one feeding’ (talking about breast-feeding a baby). This group also contained lexicalised action nouns such as *pieņemšana* ‘reception (as social event)’ < *pieņemt* ‘receive’ and *lūgšana* ‘prayer’ < *lūgties* ‘pray’. Such lexicalisations were not found with the continuative construction in my sample.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> There is one instance of *lūdz vienā lūgšanā* in the corpus LVK2018, but its interpretation is not straightforward, as non-reflexive *lūgt* means ‘ask’, not ‘pray’. It may be ‘asks continuously’, ‘asks (begs) imploringly’, or ‘asks in a prayer’. From the context I would interpret it as ‘asks imploringly in a prayer’, referring to only one prayer, not continuous praying. The example is taken from a short story by Laima Muktupāvela, whose prose is characterised by a creative, often non-conventional use of expression means.

In Section 3.1 I describe the degree of syntagmatic and paradigmatic variability within the construction, that is, variation in word order and the possibility of inserting elements between the parts, and the range of morphological forms of the first verb. In Section 3.2 I consider the lexical diversity of verbs used in the construction, and in Section 3.3 I discuss which meanings are expressed with the construction.

### 3.1 Syntagmatic and paradigmatic variability

The continuous construction shows a high degree of cohesion. The order of the elements is almost always *V vienā V-šanā*, only in one instance was it *vienā V-šanā V*.

Only in 4 of the 129 instances was another element found between the verb and the phrase *vienā V-šanā*. In three instances it was a direct object (13) and once it was a cognate subject (14).

- (13) *plāpā vienā laidā, visam piekrīt,*  
 chat.PRS.3 one.LOC.SG row.LOC.SG all.DAT.SG agree.PRS.3  
*slavē jūs vienā slavēšanā*  
 praise.PRS.3 2PL.ACC one.LOC.SG praise.ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘[the aunt] chatters away without interruption, agrees with everything, praises you continuously’
- (14) *No jūlija līdz oktobrim 1844. g.*  
 from July.GEN.SG until October.DAT.SG 1844 y[ear]  
*lija lietus vienā lišanā*  
 rain(V).PST.3 rain(NOUN).NOM.SG one.LOC.SG rain(V).ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘From July to October 1844 it rained without interruption’  
 (literally: ‘rain rained in one raining’)

Most often, arguments and adverbials are placed before the construction, which means that the construction is treated like a single verb in rhematic position.

- (15) [*iedzīvotāji*]SUB [šo “*gadsimta būvi*”]DO  
 inhabitant.NOM.PL DEM.ACC.SG century.GEN.SG building.ACC.SG  
*lamā vienā lamāšanā*  
 curse.PRS.3 one.LOC.SG curse.ACN.LOC.SG  
 literally: ‘[Locals]SUB [this “building of the century”]DO are cursing continually’



- (16) [*man*                    *nesaprotamā*                    *valodā*]ADV  
 1SG.DAT                    incomprehensible.LOC.SG                    language.LOC.SG  
 [*kāpņu*                    *teļpā*]ADV  
 stair.GEN.PL                    room.LOC.SG  
 [*kaut ko*]DO                    *runā*                    *vienā*                    *runāšanā*  
 something.ACC                    talk.PRS.3                    one.LOC.SG                    talk.ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘are talking on something without interruption in the stairwell in  
 a language incomprehensible to me’

The construction may also be fronted into topic position, but there is only one such instance in my sample (17).

- (17) *Da*                    *bāž*                    *vienā*                    *bāšanā*  
 PTC                    shove.PRS.3                    one.LOC.SG                    shove.ACN.LOC.SG  
 [*cilvēki*]SUB                    [*visādus*                    *mēslus*]DO                    *sevī*  
 human.NOM.PL                    all\_kind\_of.ACC.PL.M                    crap.ACC.PL                    RFL.LOC  
 ‘Really, people keep stuffing themselves with all kind of crap.’

Most often (in 85% of the instances) the construction appears without any argument other than the subject, and subjects are generally placed before the verb.

Additional queries found no instance of an argument or any other element in the slot between *vienā* and *V-šanā*. This is different in the sister construction, especially in the pattern TIME PASSES *vienā V-šanā*, where arguments and reinforcing elements sometimes occur in this slot.

- (18) *Mums*                    *vasara*                    *paiet*                    *vienā*  
 1PL.DAT                    summer.NOM.SG                    pass.PRS.3                    one.LOC.SG  
*šašliku*                    *cepšanā*  
 shashlik.GEN.PL                    fry.ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘We are constantly having shashlik in summer.’ (“Our summer passes in one frying of shashlik.”)
- (19) *Šīs*                    *brīvdienas*                    *paiet*                    *vienā*  
 DEM.NOM.PL.F                    holiday.NOM.PL                    pass.PRS.3                    one.LOC.SG  
*vienīgā*                    *skriešanā*  
 single.LOC.SG                    run.ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘These holidays are passing in [me] constantly running around.’  
 (“in a single running about”)

This construction is less cohesive than the continuative construction, but it shares its preferred position in the clause: in my sample, it was always

found in rhematic position at the end of the clause. The idiomatic expression *vienā laidā* ‘incessantly’ in turn does not allow the insertion of other elements (\**vienā vienīgā laidā*), but it is much more variable with respect to its position, appearing in various places in a clause, both before and after the predicate. It may be modified as a whole (*gandrīz vienā laidā* ‘almost nonstop’) and coordinated with other adverbials, for example, *runāja skaļi un vienā laidā* ‘talked loudly and without interruption’. Thus, *vienā laidā* is treated as one word, an adverb, while the parts of the construction *vienā V-šanā* are less tightly connected, unless it is part of the continuative construction.

The continuative construction is used most often in present tense, often referring to a general state of affairs or habitual actions (for example, in 15 and 17). Third and first person present and past tense taken together make up 88% of the sample (N = 114 of 129).

**Table 1.** Most frequent forms of V (total of tokens = 129)

Form		Person		
		3rd	1SG	other
PRS	82	74	7	1 (2PL)
PST	33	23	10	0
INF	7	-	-	-
other	7	2	0	0
sum	129	99	17	1

The “other” forms in the table consist of 3 instances of the debitive (*jārunā vienā runāšanā* ‘one has to talk nonstop’), 1 evidential (*māte raudot vienā raudāšanā* ‘(said that) mother was crying constantly’), 1 third person future (*slimos vienā slimošanā* ‘will be constantly ill’), 1 stative passive (20 below) and one action noun (*muldēšana vienā muldēšanā* ‘constant twaddling’).

### 3.2 Lexical input

Verbs used in the continuative construction in general denote unbounded actions or processes. Consequently, they are simple verbs without prefix. In one example in my sample, the verb contained a prefix in the first use, but not in the action noun. This is also one of the few examples with the verb in a form other than simple present or past tense. It refers to a state brought about by continuous actions, which is a possible, but not a typical use of the construction.

- (20) *apkārt*      *viss*                      *ir*                      *no-pēdo-t-s*  
 around      all.NOM.SG.M      be.PRS.3      PVB-clump-PST.PP-NOM.SG.M  
*vienā*      *pēdo-šan-ā*  
 one.LOC      clump-ACN-LOC  
 ‘all around everything is trodden down through constant clumping  
 around’

The 129 tokens in my sample represent 57 different types (verbal lexemes). Intransitive verbs are more frequent than transitive verbs. Intransitive verbs more often are agentive, but there are also some patientive intransitive verbs, such as *brukt* ‘break, fall to pieces’, *slimot* ‘be ill’. The number of primary verbs (verbs without a thematic vowel, first conjugation in traditional Latvian grammar) is noticeably higher than may be expected. Primary verbs are listed before secondary verbs in each of the thematic groups below.

Four verbs (tokens = types) are reflexive. Action nouns derived from reflexive verbs do not have a locative form in Latvian; if a locative is built, it does not have a reflexive marker (see Kalnača & Lokmane 2010). Two of the four reflexive verbs in my sample occurred in the extract from Mark Twain’s story given above in (2), thus in a text produced in the late 19th century. The verbs *valstīties* ‘toss, turn around’ and *bimbināties* ‘jingle’ are reflexive verbs. The corresponding action nouns have a reflexive marker in the nominative (*valstīšan-ās*) and accusative (*valstīšan-os*), but the locative forms in the text do not (*valstīšan-ā*, *bimbināšan-ā*).

The verbs in my sample can be grouped into several lexical-semantic classes. The biggest group, containing more than half of the types and 61% of the tokens, contains verbs of speaking and other vocal or facial expression. Other groups are smaller, for example, verbs of movement (7 types, 11 tokens), or consumption (4 types, 5 tokens). Several verbs belong to slang, which attests to the colloquial nature of the construction. The full list of verbs is given below. The three most frequent verbs are marked.

Verbs attested in the continuative construction in lvTenTen14:  
 129 tokens, 57 types  
 primary verbs (class I) = 40 tokens, 24 types  
 (17 intransitive, 9 transitive; 1 reflexive)  
 secondary verbs (classes II and III) = 89 tokens, 33 types  
 (26 intransitive, 7 transitive; 3 reflexive)

SOUND, SPEECH, CRY/LAUGH: 31 types, 79 tokens

*bļaut* (2) ‘shout’, *brēkt* ‘cry’, *kliegt* ‘scream’, *spiegt* (2) ‘shriek’, *blēt* ‘bleat’, *riet* ‘bark’; *ņirgt* ‘sneer’, *smieties* ‘laugh’, *malt* (2) literally ‘grind’, here: ‘rehash’ (coll.), ***raudāt* (12) ‘weep’**, *bimmbāt* ‘cry’, *čīkstēt* (2) ‘whimper’, *pīkstēt* (here:) ‘whimper’, *dūdot* ‘coo’ (here: of a little girl), *dziedāt* ‘sing’, *bimbīnāties* (here:) ‘jingle’, *ķiķināt* ‘giggle’, *purkšķēt* ‘rattle’, *sprauslāt* ‘snort; sputter’, *tarkšķēt* (3) ‘rattle; chatter’, ***runāt* (12) ‘talk’**, *čalot* ‘chat’, *leijerēt* (slang) ‘talk a lot’, *skalot* (here, slang:) ‘say loudly’, *taurēt* (here, slang:) ‘say loudly’, *lielīt* ‘praise’, *slavēt* (3) ‘praise’, *lamāt* ‘swear, abuse’, *melot* (5) ‘lie’, ***muldēt* (11) ‘twaddle, talk nonsense’**, *smaidīt* (4) ‘smile’

MOVEMENT: 7 types, 11 tokens: *braukt* ‘go by transport’, *iet* ‘go, walk’, *skriet* (5) ‘run’, *krist* ‘fall’; *skraidīt* ‘run about’, *valstīties* ‘roll, toss and turn’, (*no*) *pēdot* ‘tread, clump; make a path by walking’

OTHER: 28 types, 39 tokens

*bāzt iekšā* ‘shove inside’ (here: ‘consume’), *dzert* (2) ‘drink’, *grauzt* ‘gnaw’, *rīt* (2) ‘gulp’; *svīst* ‘sweat’, *jaukt* ‘mix up’, *jukt* ‘go to pieces’, *brukt* ‘fall to pieces’, *līt* ‘rain’, *pļaut* ‘mow’, *kāst* (here, slang:) ‘wheedle out’, *slaukt* (here, slang:) ‘demand money’, *dirst* (4) and *drāzt* (literally vulgarisms, here slang, approximate meanings in particular contexts: *dirst* ‘talk nonsense’, ‘complain’, ‘go to pieces’, *drāzt* ‘abuse’ or ‘ruin’) *čurāt* ‘pee’, *klepot* ‘cough’, *mirdzēt* ‘shine’, *pilēt* ‘drip’, *rakstīt* (2) ‘write’, *rīkot* ‘organise’, *shēmot* ‘scheme’, *skaitīt* ‘count’, *copēt* ‘fish’, *slimot* (5) ‘be ill’, *trīcēt* ‘tremble’, *plaisīties* ‘burst, crack’, *ziedēt* (2) ‘blossom’, *liņāt* ‘drizzle’

The three most frequently used verbs in the construction are *runāt* ‘talk’, *raudāt* ‘weep’ and *muldēt* ‘twaddle, talk nonsense’. Within a usage-based approach to Construction Grammar (Bybee 2010; 2013), they may be described as prominent exemplars of the construction, around which other verbs in this semantic group cluster. The group is held together by family resemblance. It has probably come into existence by item-based analogy, and the same process can be used for the further extension of the construction to other verbs.

Some facts about the frequency of these verbs are noteworthy. First, the overall frequency of the verbs differs very much – from 441.4 per million (*runāt* ‘talk’) to only 5.6 per million (*muldēt* ‘twaddle’). On this background, the 11 instances with *muldēt* have a greater value than the 12 exemplars with *runāt*, which, as a high frequency item, may be supposed to show up

frequently in various constructions. Furthermore, for each of these verbs the occurrence in the construction represents a significant number of the overall uses of the locative form of the action noun. This becomes evident when comparing them with action nouns whose locative form is common, but not in this function, for example the action noun of *skaitīt* ‘count’, which has only one instance in my sample. The action noun of *skriet* ‘run’ occurs five times in the continuative construction, but this represents only 0.4% of the uses of the locative form *skriešanā* ‘in running’. The exact figures are given in Table 2. I refrain from more sophisticated statistics such as collostructional analysis, as I don’t think it would be more informative, especially as the overall frequency of the construction is low (cf. Schmid & Küchenhoff 2013). The absolute number of occurrences in the construction with each verb constitutes less than 10% of the sample. Together with the relatively large number of verbs used only once in the construction, this attests to a low degree of idiomaticity.

**Table 2.** Frequency of individual verbs and action nouns

Verb (frequency per million)	V- <i>šanā</i> (ACN.LOC)	<i>vienā</i> V- <i>šanā</i>	V <i>vienā</i> V- <i>šanā</i> (continuous)	percent of V- <i>šanā</i>
<i>runāt</i> ‘talk’ (441.40)	123	13	12	9.8%
<i>muldēt</i> ‘twaddle’ (5.60)	66	11	11	16.7%
<i>raudāt</i> ‘weep’ (31.40)	42	17	12	28.6%
<i>skaitīt</i> ‘count’ (22.40)	851	1	1	0.1%
<i>skriet</i> ‘run’ (92.40)	1140	97	5	0.4%

The relatively low significance of the verb *skriet* ‘run’ in this construction is especially interesting as *vienā skriešanā* is very prominent in the sister construction without cognate predicate. Here, it has a share of 8.5% of the occurrences of *skriešanā*, but more importantly, it occurs in 90 of 140 instances (64%) of patterns such as BE *vienā* V-*šanā*, TIME PASSES / SPEND TIME *vienā* V-*šanā*. This means that *vienā skriešanā* is more idiomatic, or, in Bybee’s words, it “has formed a more autonomous chunk” (Bybee 2013, 64), but this chunk does not show up prominently in the continuative construction.

In clauses with the adverb *vienā laidā* ‘incessantly’, no prominence of particular verbs in the predicate is found. The range of verbs is much greater than in the constructions with *vienā V-šanā*. While activities prevail, there are also achievements and states, including modal verbs such as *gribēt* ‘want’, *varēt* ‘be able’. We also find nouns without verbs in existential clauses (*ballītes vienā laidā* ‘parties [happen] nonstop’, *katastrofās vienā laidā* ‘catastrophes [happen] nonstop’). The predicate including the meaning ‘incessantly’ may be negated by formally negating the verb: *nerunā vienā laidā* ‘does not talk incessantly’. With the continuative construction, negation is not attested.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3 Meaning

The continuative construction expresses the meaning of continuous activity regularly and with little variation. It may refer to a single action or process that continues without interruption over a certain time, as in (21).

- (21) *Āetru*                      *stundu*                      *laikā*                      *principā*  
 four.GEN                      hour.GEN.PL                      time.LOC.SG                      principle.LOC.SG  
*rakstīju*                      *vienā*                      *rakstīšanā*  
 write.PST.1SG                      one.LOC.SG                      write.ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘I kept writing for four hours more or less without interruption’

Verbs used in this meaning are durative; they express an unbounded activity or process. Other examples are (1) with ‘cry’ and (14) with ‘rain’. More often however the real-world situation the utterance refers to is not one activity, but a constant reiteration of the same action, especially if it is a habitual activity. This is illustrated in (13) ‘praises you continuously’ and (16) ‘are talking without interruption in the stairway’. Still, the construction does not express iterativity (repeating an action on a single occasion, Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994, 160), but pictures the constant repetition of actions as one enduring situation.

In (22) iterativity proper is indicated morphologically in the verb *skraidīt* ‘run about’, which is derived from *skriet* ‘run’ with the iterative

<sup>9</sup> With the construction TIME PASSES *vienā V-šanā*, I found one instance of contrastive negation: *diena paiet nevis vienā skriešanā, bet gan sēdēšanā*, literally: ‘the day passes not in one running, but in one sitting’ = ‘I was not running, but sitting all day’. This is clearly an instance of creative, non-typical language use. The sentence was introduced by *var teikt* ‘one may say’.

suffix *-dī-* and ablaut, and reinforced lexically by the phrase *tur un šurp* ‘to some place and back’. The clause is part of a depiction of someone working physically, in contrast to people doing their work sitting all day in a comfortable chair. What this person does on one working day is running about from one place to another (*skraidīt tur un šurp*). The continuative construction quantifies over this iterative construction and depicts it as one large, ongoing event.

- (22) *skraida*            *vienā*            *skraidīšanā*  
 run.ITER.PRS.3    one.LOC.SG    run.ITER.ACN.LOC.SG  
*tur*                    *un*                *šurp*  
 there                 and                 here  
 ‘keeps running about all the time somewhere and back’

The meaning of reiteration of events is compatible with telic verbs such as ‘break down’. They are used in the construction in their “imperfective” form, where a separate particle carries the meaning otherwise expressed by a prefix. Thus, in example (23) the combination *bruka nost* is used for ‘break down’. Note however that the choice between prefix and particle is not a grammaticised aspectual opposition in Latvian (for example, particles may also be added to prefixed verbs).

- (23) *nu*            *bruka*            *nost*            *vienā*            *brukšanā*.  
 PTC            break.PST.3    down            one.LOC.SG    break.ACN.LOC.SG  
 ‘well, it (= the car) broke down all the time.’

Example (23), where the subject is an inanimate object, or (14), where it is ‘rain’, show that the meaning component “the agent of the action is deliberately keeping the action going” (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994, 127) does not have to be taken literally and may fade.

Many instances have a negative connotation: the constant activity is annoying to the speaker or has a negative effect on other participants. This is not an invariant part of the meaning of the construction but rather one arising through implicature. Another implicature, based on the fact that the construction focuses on the action in its duration or the frequent repetition of unbounded activities, is “non-seriousness” (talking all the time is less serious than saying something once) and futility, lack of result. The latter is illustrated in (24).

- (24) [*Kā palika tumšs tā tikko ēsma sasniedza grunti,*  
*tā copēja vienā copēšanā,*  
 PTC fish[V].PST.3 one.LOC.SG fish[V].ACN.LOC.SG  
*tikai ārā nevarēja izvilkt!*  
 only out NEG.can.PST.3 PVB.pull.INF  
 ‘From the moment it was dark, as soon as the bait touched the ground,  
 [he] was fishing and fishing, only [he] could not pull out [fish]!’

In general, the Latvian continuative construction shares much of the meaning of English *keep (on) V-ing* (see Glad 2016 with summaries of previous accounts) and some of the meaning of the Mandarin Chinese continuative marker *-xiaqu* (Xiao & McEnery 2004, 227–235). Like English *keep*, the Latvian construction is not used for expressing continuation of an activity after an interruption, a meaning expressed by verbs such as Latvian *turpināt* ‘continue’ and its English equivalent. The Chinese continuative marker *-xiaqu* does allow such a use (Xiao & McEnery 2004, 231). On the other hand, Latvian shares with Chinese the fact that the continuative gram is not used with achievement verbs, which is possible in English (*keep winning*). Detailed cross-linguistic comparison of the meanings of continuative grams is still lacking, but seems to be a promising field for investigation into the nature of this category. For example, in Chinese the continuative marker is often found with quality verbs and may then indicate an intensification (Xiao & McEnery 2004, 229–230). This is found neither with English *keep* nor with the Latvian construction, but seems to be typical for the Finnish continuative construction shown in (7) above (judging from examples I saw in a corpus).

Summing up the findings of Section 3, we may note that the Latvian continuative construction shows many features of a schematic construction. It has a high degree of syntagmatic cohesion and most often takes the place of a simple verb in the clause. Morphological variability is of medium degree, with a clear preference for third and first person past and present, but other forms are attested. The construction is often used with verbs of speaking or other vocal or facial expressions (‘cry’, ‘laugh’), but is found also with verbs from various other semantic fields and is certainly productive. It has a constant, abstract meaning that concerns the duration of the action expressed by the verb and fits the cross-linguistically attested category CONTINUATIVE. On the other hand, the construction is not frequent in contemporary Latvian, it is not in opposition to non-continuative forms of the verb and it shows no signs of becoming part of the verbal paradigm. Still, the comparison with



another construction containing *vienā V-šanā* and with the adverb *vienā laidā* shows that the continuative construction expresses a verbal category and consequently differs in its behaviour both from idiomatic expressions and from looser combinations of verbs and adverbs.

#### 4. Cognate constructions and iteration

In this section I will compare the continuative construction with constructions where the same verb is repeated in the same form (ITERATION) and with other Latvian cognate constructions. All these constructions deserve a detailed analysis for themselves, but as this is beyond the scope of this paper, I will only point out the most important similarities and differences. The goal of this comparison is to determine in which respects the continuative construction is special and which of its features may be characteristic for verbal cognate constructions in general.

In written Latvian, ITERATION is found mainly in three patterns<sup>10</sup>: syntetic conjunction with *un* ‘and’, asyndetic conjunction with a comma, and juxtaposition without comma; a separate investigation would be necessary to establish whether the second and the third type are distinguished in speech. In the corpus *lvTenTen13*, iteration as defined here is much more frequent than cognate constructions. The numbers of unfiltered hits for each pattern are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Iteration of verb forms with tense and person marking in lvTenTen14*

Type (example)	Query	Hits
<i>runā un runā</i> ‘talks and talks’	1:[tag=“vm.i.*“] [word=“un“]2:[tag=“vm.i.*“] & 1.word=2.word	3825
<i>runā, runā</i> ‘talks, talks’	1:[tag=“vm.i.*“] [word=“,”]2:[tag=“vm.i.*“] & 1.word=2.word	4968
<i>runā runā</i> ‘talks talks’	1:[tag=“vm.i.*“] 2:[tag=“vm.i.*“] & 1.word=2.word	1445

<sup>10</sup> Another pattern, that of a correlative construction, will be introduced later in this section.

A manual filtering would probably reduce the number for the first pattern by no more than 10%, for the second pattern by about 20%, but much more for the third pattern, as strings with a mere repetition are often the result of some mistake. The first and the second pattern are often combined if the verb is repeated more than once (*runā, runā un runā* ‘talks, talks and talks’).

Iteration of the same word form is found in many, probably all languages. As an iconic technique based on the principle “more is more”, it generally is used to express AUGMENTATION (an increase of quantity—with verbs this concerns primarily the duration of a situation) and INTENSIFICATION (an increase of degree) (Moravcsik 1978; Kajitani 2005). Both types may also be distinguished in iterations of verbs in Latvian. (25) is an example of INTENSIFICATION (‘love very much’), while (26) is an example of AUGMENTATION (‘will snow for a long time’)

- (25) *es mīlu, mīlu, mīlu Franciju.*  
 1SG.NOM love.PRS.1SG love.PRS.1SG love.PRS.1SG France.ACC.SG  
 ‘I love France very much.’
- (26) *Sajūta, ka tikai snigs, snigs, snigs*  
 feeling.NOM.SG that only snow.FUT.3 snow.FUT.3 snow.FUT.3  
*un pavasaris nekad, nekad vairs neiestāsies*  
 and spring.NOM.SG never never more NEG.set\_in.FUT.3.RFL  
 ‘A feeling that it will continue to snow forever and that spring will never, never come again.’

In (26) we also see the repetition of an adverb (*nekad* ‘never’). Both examples illustrate the possibility of more than one repetition of a word, which is the first difference to cognate constructions. Another difference is the possibility of negation: negated word forms are iterated just as positive forms (27), while in cognate constructions expressing augmentation or intensification, negation does not occur.

- (27) *Kapitālisms ir kā Godo. Tu viņu*  
 capitalism.NOM.SG be.PRS.3 as Godot 2SG.NOM 3.ACC.SG  
*gaidi un gaidi, bet viņš*  
 wait.PRS.2SG and wait.PRS.2SG but 3.NOM.SG.M  
*nenāk un nenāk.*  
 NEG.come.PRS.3 and NEG.come.PRS.3  
 ‘Capitalism is like Godot. You are waiting and waiting, but he/it does not come.’

This kind of “double negation” is based on the fact that the negative marker is part of the verbal word form in Latvian, and it is word forms that are iterated. In German, where negation is expressed by a separate word, it is more common to repeat only the verbal form if a conjunction is used (*er [kommt und kommt] nicht*, but *kommt nicht und kommt nicht* is possible according to my native speaker judgment), and in English, where negation is expressed with an auxiliary, repetition with negation sounds clumsy, if it is at all possible (*?doesn't come and doesn't come /??doesn't and doesn't come / \*doesn't come and come*).

The meaning of iteration is more general and vague than that of the continuative construction, but in some instances it may be the same and also trigger the same implicatures. In (28), *runā un runā* ‘talks and talks’ indeed expresses continuous, repeated activity, with the implicature that this activity leads to no result. In (29), this is also reflected in the opposition between simple *brūk* ‘breaks’ and prefixed *sabrukt* ‘break down (completely)’.

- (28) *Ekonomikas*            *Ministrs*            *runā*            *un*            *runā*  
 economy.GEN.SG    minister.NOM.SG    talk.PRS.3    and    talk.PRS.3  
 [par industriālās politikas nepieciešamību, bet konkrēti  
 industrializācijas projekti pagaidām nav dzirdēti.]  
 ‘The minister of economy keeps talking [about the necessity of a policy  
 of industrialisation, but we have so far not heard of any concrete  
 industrialisation project.]’

- (29) [Bet to jau teica arī Markss, jau pirms simtpiecdesmit gadiem, taču,  
 skat, viss vēl joprojām savās vietās]  
*un*    *tikai*    *brūk,*            *brūk*            *un*    *brūk,*  
 and    only    break.PRS.3    break.PRS.3    and    break.PRS.3  
*bet*    *nekādi*    *nevar*            *sabrukt!*  
 but    no\_way    NEG.can.PRS.3    PVB.break  
 ‘[But Marx already said that one hundred fifty years ago, but, look:  
 everything is still standing]. It just keeps breaking, but it cannot  
 possibly break down completely!’

There is also another, purely pragmatic use of iteration: the affirmation of a proposition in an answer to a question where this proposition was negated.<sup>11</sup> As this use is typical for spoken dialogues, it is rarely found in corpora compiled from written sources. In (30), the answer is shown not as

<sup>11</sup> Pragmatic uses of iteration in Estonian dialogues have been investigated by Keevaliik (2010). There seem to be many parallels in Latvian, which still have to be explored.

direct speech, but as a kind of inner speech, which explains the difference in tense in the two clauses.

- (30) “*Vai jums te, institūtā, kas*  
 Q 2PL.DAT here institute.LOC.SG something  
*nepatīk?” Oi, nē, patika, patika!*  
 NEG.please.PRS.3 oh no please.PST.3 please.PST.3  
 ‘[They asked:] “Is there something you don’t like here in  
 the institute?” Oh no, [I] liked it indeed!’

In a way, the technique of iteration is the mirror image of the continuative construction: while the latter depicts a series of repeated actions as one single continuing event (especially through the word *viens* ‘one’), iteration treats a single event as several by using more than one predicate: In (25), there is a single state of loving, which is spread over three verbs with person marking, and in (27), the constant waiting and the not-coming are treated as several events each.

When compared to cognate constructions, iteration appears less like a construction in the sense of a constant pairing of form and meaning. Not only is its meaning less specific and more triggered through the context, it is also less easy to determine its form and draw borders between individual constructions or patterns. There may be a continuum between tighter patterns as in the examples (25)–(28) and repetition of the same form in different clauses, as in example (2a) above, where three clauses in a row contained the finite verb *suffered*.

A further difference between iteration and cognate constructions is the lack of preference for certain types and tokens, or at least a much weaker preference. All types of verbs may be used in iteration: durative and punctual, activities as well as states, accomplishments and achievements, prefixed and simple verbs. Furthermore, though some verbs are used more often than others in the samples drawn from the corpus, there seem to be no salient exemplars.

Let us now examine another cognate construction, the COGNATE INFINITIVE CONSTRUCTION, which shares characteristics with both the continuative construction and iteration of verb forms. In this construction, an infinitive of the same lexical verb is put in front of a predicate, as illustrated in (31).

- (31) *Kāzu*                      *torti*                      *viesi*  
 wedding.GEN.PL    cake.ACC.SG    guest.NOM.PL  
*slavē-t*                      *slavēja*.  
 praise-INF                      praise.PST.3  
 ‘The guests praised the wedding cake highly.’

This construction is about ten times more frequent than the continuative construction, but not as frequent as iteration. In the corpus lvTenTen14, 1429 clauses were found which contained a string V-INF V-FINITE (where finite = forms with tense and person marking.)<sup>12</sup> and only a small part of this raw data does not represent the construction (maybe 5%).

A closer inspection reveals that there are actually two constructions with a cognate infinitive, which are distinguished by functional and formal features.

First, as illustrated in (31), a cognate infinitive is used to express an intensification (high degree) of the meaning of the predicate. This contrasts nicely with the continuative construction, which quantifies the duration of the predicate. Compare *slavēt slavēja* ‘praised highly’ in (31) (that is, on one occasion expressed high praise) with *slavē vienā slavēšanā* ‘praises continuously’ (that is, at several times, repeatedly, utters words of praise) in (13). As shown above, iteration can express both Intensification and Augmentation, and indeed the five examples with *slavē un slavē* ‘praise and praise’ in the corpus are a bit vague in this respect — it is not clear whether they refer to repeated instances or to a high degree of praising, or both.

When conveying Intensification, the cognate infinitive construction shows prominent exemplars: individual verbs as well as semantic classes of verbs which represent larger parts of the sample. The most frequent individual verb in the construction is *gaidīt* ‘wait’ (143 instances, thus about 10% of the sample), but the most numerous represented semantic classes are (i) verbs of encouragement: *aicināt* ‘invite’ (115), *vilināt* ‘tempt, entice’ (96), *mudināt* ‘encourage’ (33), *vedināt* ‘invite, urge’ (11) and others, and (ii) verbs of teeming and related meanings of abundance: *mudžet* ‘teem’ (84), *kūsāt* ‘boil over’, ‘throb’ (111), *ņudzēt* ‘swarm’ (7), and various verbs of iterative or durative light emission such as *dzirkstīt* (10), *mirdzēt* (4), *ņirbēt* (11) — all meaning ‘sparkle, glitter, flicker’, *starot* ‘shine’ (17). While in some instances the construction

<sup>12</sup> Query: 1:[tag="vm.n.\*"] 2:[tag="vm.i.\*"] & 1.lemma=2.lemma

has become idiomatic (for example, with *gaidīt gaida* ‘is waiting very much’), the range of verbs with which it is found is large, and probably any activity or state that can be intensified may be expressed with this construction.

Second, a cognate infinitive can have pragmatic or discourse-structuring functions, marking a concessive focus (‘true, V, but...’) or an emphatic affirmation (‘indeed V’), or simply topicalising the predicate (‘as to V-ing...’).

- (32) *Balsot*            *balsošu,*            *bet*            *jēgu*  
 vote.INF            vote.FUT.1SG            but            sense.ACC.SG  
*tam*                            *neredzu.*  
 DEM.DAT.SG.M            NEG.see.PRS.1SG  
 ‘I will vote, but I don’t see the sense in it.’ (‘As to voting, I will do it, but...’)

Depending on the verb and the context, the emphatic affirmation may be interpreted as an expression of continuous activity, as in (33). However, this is not an invariant part of its meaning (for example, (32) refers only to one instance of voting, in the coming elections; see also (34), where actually a low intensity and frequency of the activity is referred to).

- (33) [*nemainīga paliek tikai pati problēma – jau 4 gadus runa par vien un to pašu.*]  
*runā-t*            *runājām,*            *apkure*            *kā*            *nav,*  
 talk-INF            talk.PST.1PL            heating.NOM.SG            how            NEG.be.PRS.3  
*tā*                            *nav.*  
 so                            NEG.be.PRS.3  
 ‘[only the problem itself does not change – one and the same issue has been talked over for four years already.] We did talk (all the time / a lot) but the heating is still missing.’

In its pragmatic function, the cognate infinitive construction does not show a preference for certain verbs. Furthermore, it allows the insertion of arguments (34) or particles (35) between the infinitive and the finite verb. This is not possible when the construction conveys an intensification of the verb meaning (as in *slavēt slavē* ‘praises highly’).

- (34) *Runāt*            *viņi*                    *runāja*            *savā*  
 talk.INF            3PL.NOM.M            talk.PST.3            RPOSS.LOC.SG  
*starpā*                            *maz*  
 between[NOUN].LOC.SG            little  
 ‘They talked little to each other’ (‘As to talking...’)
- (35) *Maksāt*            *gan*            *maksā,*            *bet*            *ārkārtīgi*            *negribīgi.*  
 pay.INF            PTC            pay.PRS.3            but            extremely            reluctantly  
 ‘He does pay, but extremely reluctantly.’

More research on this construction is needed, but from what I have seen so far I conclude that the insertion of elements within the construction is not very frequent and the degree of cohesion is almost as high as with the continuative construction, where arguments are also sometimes inserted (as in examples (13) and (14) above).

In the pragmatic function we also find negation of the finite verb,<sup>13</sup> as in (36). When a cognate infinitive indicates intensification, negation is not possible.

- (36) *saprast*                      *visu*                      *saprot*                      *bet*  
 understand.INF              all.ACC.SG              understand.PRS.3              but  
*runāt*                              *nerunā*  
 talk.INF                              NEG.talk.PRS.3  
 ‘understands everything, but does not speak [the language]’

Table 4 summarises the differences between the constructions discussed so far.

**Table 4.** *Iteration and cognate constructions*

	ITERATION	COGNATE INF 1 (PRAGMATIC)	COGNATE INF 2 (SEMANTIC)	CONTINUATIVE V <i>vienā V-šanā</i>
meaning	Intensification, Augmentation, pragmatic functions	pragmatic functions	Intensification	Augmentation: continuity
lexical preferences	no (?)	no	yes, individual verbs and semantic classes	yes, semantic classes
syntagmatic cohesion	? (depends on the pattern, more research needed)	high	complete	high
negation	possible (iteration of negated verb forms)	possible (negation of the finite verb)	not attested	not attested

<sup>13</sup>In folksongs, we also find an additional negative marker before the infinitive: *Es ar savu bāleliņu // Ne runāt nerunāju* ‘I don’t (even) speak to my brother’ (anymore, because he has vexed me by his marriage).

Two results emerge from the comparison of the constructions. First, cognate constructions in general show a higher degree of cohesion and have a more specific meaning than iteration. Second, constructions which are specialised for Intensification or Augmentation show preferences for certain lexical classes or individual lexemes. This may sound trivial, but is not: the lexical classes are not predictable. Why are verbs of encouragement so often used in the cognate infinitive construction and not, for example, verbs expressing emotions? Why does the continuative cognate construction prefer verbs of vocal expression over verbs of movement? These choices are not motivated by the meaning of the construction. They can be explained as the result of clustering around prominent exemplars and the extension of the construction by item-based analogy (cf. Bybee 2010; 2013).

There is another cognate construction which behaves very similar to the cognate infinitive construction but is less productive and frequent, though not rare (I have found over 700 instances in the corpus lvTenTen14). Instead of the infinitive it contains a form derived by the suffix *-tin* or *-in* (Endzelin 1923, 223–228; MLLVG-I, 1959, 711–712; in contemporary Latvian, *-tin* is still productive while *-in* seems to be obsolete). This construction has the same semantic and pragmatic functions as the cognate infinitive. Most often it has an intensifying meaning, as in *lūgtin lūdz* ‘asks imploringly’, but it is also used for topicalisation and contrastive focus. Only with semantic functions do we find prominent exemplars of verbs (for example, *lūgt(ies)* ‘ask, pray’, *augt* ‘grow’, *raut* ‘pull; tear’, *vilkt* ‘pull’, *lauzties* ‘push through (itr.)’, *saukt* ‘call’), while only in pragmatic functions do we find negation. A closer analysis of its functions and use in contemporary Latvian is a subject for future studies. Formally, the construction with *-tin* differs from the other cognate constructions investigated here in at least three features: (i) the form is only derived from primary verbs and exceptionally a few secondary verbs, thus, it is not fully productive; (ii) the invariant form with *-tin* contains only the root of the verb, while the main verb may contain a prefix (*augtin pie-augs* ‘will grow (up)’, *rītin ap-rija* ‘gulped down’); (iii) the invariant form is used only in this construction and does not form part of the verbal paradigm (in the traditional understanding, which I share here).

Two other cognate constructions use regular non-finite verbforms and are worth a short look in comparison to the continuous construction.

The first one contains the present passive participle of the same verb as used in the predicate, marked for accusative and definiteness. Often the construction additionally contains the reflexive possessive pronoun as a modifier. The schema is V (*savu*) V-*mo*.



- (37) [*Tu vispār lasi ko citi ir uzrakstījuši,*  
*vai tikai stulbi bļauj savu*  
 or only stupidly rant.PRS.3 RPOSS.ACC.SG  
*bļaujamo??*  
 rant.PRS.PP.ACC.SG.DEF  
 ‘[Do you read what others have written at all,] or are you just  
 stupidly ranting and raving (to yourself)?’

As mentioned above in Section 2, this construction is formally very similar to the Finnish continuative construction (as in (7) above) and the corresponding construction in Estonian, which has a vaguer meaning. As Estonian does not have possessive suffixes, the formal parallel to Latvian is greater, as can be seen in (38) from an Estonian dialect.

- (38) Estonian, eastern dialect (Pilvik 2017, 316; glosses adapted)  
*pasun puhu-b õma `puhku-mis-t*  
 horn blow-3SG own.GEN blow-ACN-PRT  
 ‘The horn is blowing its blowing’ = ‘is blowing and blowing’

Latvian differs from Finnish and Estonian in that it uses a participle instead of an action noun here. Note that the label “passive participle” is based on the use of this participle when part of the predicate (e.g. *kaut kas ir redzams* ‘something is to be seen’), while in other syntactic functions there often is no passive meaning (cf. Nau & Holvoet 2015, 6–9). Thus, *bļaujamo* in (37) can hardly be translated as ‘that what is ranted’. The participle is also formed from intransitive verbs, such as *snigt* ‘to snow’ in (39). This also shows that the accusative phrase is rather an adverbial than a direct object.

- (39) *Sniegi snieg sniegamo, un ir*  
 SNOW.NOM.PL SNOW.PRS.3 SNOW.PRS.PP.ACC.SG.DEF and be.PRS.3  
*pavisam skaidri zināms, ka klāt*  
 completely clearly know.PP.PRS.NOM.SG.M that here  
*ir ziema.*  
 be.PRS.3 winter.NOM.SG  
 ‘Snow is falling and it is evident that winter has arrived.’

In lvTenTen14 I found 187 clauses containing such a combination,<sup>14</sup> most of them qualifying as the construction. Only two verbs make up

<sup>14</sup>Query in lvTenTen14: 1:[tag="vm.i.\*"] [word="savu"]? 2:[tag="vm.pd.app.\*"] & 1.lemma=2.lemma

more than half of the sample: *darīt* ‘do’ (73) and *malt* ‘grind; talk, prattle’ (44). The latter is the most prominent member of a lexical group of speech verbs. The meaning of the construction is not as clear-cut as with the continuous construction or the cognate infinitive, with which it has in common that it focuses the activity expressed by the verb. While some examples may imply a higher degree of intensity, this does not seem to be a constant part of the meaning. Rather, the construction expresses that the action is carried out without regard to other actions or participants: *darīt darāmo* (< *darīt* ‘do’) means ‘be doing one’s work’ (concentrating on the work, not paying attention to the surrounding), ‘be just working’ (nothing else). This meaning may be reinforced by the adverb *tikai* ‘only, just’, which is often found in clauses containing the construction. In German, the meaning of the construction may often be rendered by the idiomatic adverbial phrase *vor sich hin* (*bļaut savu bļaujamo ~ vor sich hin schimpfen*; *snieg sniegamo* in (39): *es schneit vor sich hin*). English idiomatic translations are more variable, depending on the described situation. They may involve words such as *along* or the phrase *to oneself*. Most often an English translation will contain a continuous form of the verb, as the Latvian construction describes an ongoing, unbounded action or process. It may be combined with iteration: *maļ un maļ savu maļamo* ‘is prattling and prattling on’.

Another cognate construction contains a phrase consisting of a connective originating in a question word and a converb of the same verb as used in the predicate of the clause. The connective may be a case form of the word *kas* ‘who/what’, the word *kā* ‘how, as’, or *cik* ‘how much’. The phrase immediately follows the finite verb.

- (40) [*Tā ar tiem expo objektiem notiek..*]  
*Efelis ar vēl stāv kā*  
 Eiffel\_tower.NOM.SG also still stand.PRS.3 as  
*stāvē-dam-s.*  
 stand-CVB-NOM.SG.M  
 ‘[That’s what happens with these Expo (= world’s fair) buildings...]  
 The Eiffel tower is also still standing.’

In the corpus LV<sub>TEN</sub>TEN<sub>14</sub>, I found 108 examples of this construction (unfiltered).<sup>15</sup> Some examples such as (40) suggest an (emphatic) affirmation

<sup>15</sup> Query: 1:[tag="vm.i.\*"] [word="k.\*|cik"] 2:[tag="vm.pp.\*"] & 1.lemma=2.lemma

of the predication and seem to be synonymous to a pattern with reiterated verb form and the correlative connective *kā – tā*: *kā stāv, tā stāv* (“as it is standing, so it is standing”; cf. (33) with *kā nav, tā nav* ‘is still missing’). The two patterns may also be combined:

- (41) *Vispār tur nekas nemainās, viss*  
 generally there nothing.NOM NEG.change.PRS.3 all.NOM.SG.M  
*kā stāv, tā stāv stāvēdams –*  
 as stand.PRS.3 so stand.PRS.3 stand.CVB.NOM.SG.M  
*kā bija pirms 2 gadiem, tā arī*  
 as be.PST.3 before 2 year.DAT.PL so also  
*ir tagad.*  
 be.PRS.3 now  
 ‘In general, nothing changes here. Everything is still standing as  
 before, [everything] is still as it was two years ago.’

In this meaning of continuity the construction is similar to the continuative construction. However, there are only a few examples with this meaning in the corpus. In the vast majority of instances, the pattern *V k- V-dams* has the meaning ‘whatever’, that is, it is used as a parametric concessive conditional clause. It most often appears with the modal particle *lai*, but this particle is not obligatory.

- (42) *Nejaušību vispār nav. Lai notiek*  
 coincidence.GEN.PL at\_all NEG.be.PRS.3 PTC happen.PRS.3  
*kas notikdams, visam ir*  
 what.NOM happen.CVB.NOM.SG.M all.DAT.SG.M be.PRS.3  
*savs nolūks.*  
 RPOSS.NOM.SG.M purpose.NOM.SG  
 ‘There are no coincidences. Whatever may happen, everything  
 has a purpose.’

This construction is more idiomatic than the other cognate constructions and occurs mainly with three verbs: *notikt* ‘happen’ (50 instances), *darīt* ‘do’ (15), for example *dari ko darīdams* ‘whatever you do’, and *maksāt* (11), for example *lai maksā ko/cik maksādams* ‘whatever the cost’. Nevertheless, the construction is still productive.

All constructions discussed in this section may have, at least with individual examples, a reading of ongoing activity. They differ in how much such a meaning is an invariant part of the construction and which particular aspect is in focus. Patterns of iteration (*V un V*; *V, V*) are found

with various functions, and a meaning of continued activity is often not clearly distinguished from a meaning of intensive activity. The meaning of these patterns depends largely on semantic properties of the verbs. Thus, it is not the pattern that chooses particular classes of verbs, as is the case with the continuous construction, but rather it is the verbs that make the construction, giving it a particular meaning. Iteration may express all the meanings found with the individual cognate constructions discussed here. A glance at the first examples of an alphabetically ordered list of corpus extracts for *V un V* shows this already quite clearly:

- *airē un airē* ‘rows and rows’ = ‘is rowing continuously’ (included: without paying attention to surrounding), one continued activity;
- [*mūsējie*] *aizbrauc un aizbrauc* ‘[our countrymen] emigrate and emigrate’ = ‘Latvians keep emigrating’, refers to several individual acts of a multitude of subjects;
- *alkst un alkst* ‘crave for and crave for’ = ‘crave for a lot’;
- *apaug un apaug ar putekļiem* ‘overgrows and overgrows with dust’ = ‘is more and more being covered by dust’.

The vagueness of the construction makes its use with a wide range of verbs possible. Continuative meaning arises with durative activity verbs, but the construction as such is not a continuative gram.

A bit different is the case with the pragmatic *V-INF V-FIN* construction (*balsot balsošu* ‘as to voting, I will do it’). This construction has a specific meaning, but this meaning is pragmatic, discourse-related, and therefore compatible with verbs of different semantic groups, as well as with more different tense and mood choices. If it is used with durative verbs as in *runāt runājām* ‘we were talking (as opposed to acting)’, continuative meaning may arise by conversational implicature. The formally equal semantic *V-INF V-FIN* construction (*gaidīt gaida* ‘is waiting longingly’) does not express continuity, but intensification.

The other two cognate constructions discussed here are more related to continuity, but they highlight specific aspects. The construction *V (savu) V-mo* essentially means ‘going on with V without paying attention to other things or actors’. The pattern *V kā V-dams* signals continuity of states (*stāv kā stāvēdams* ‘is still standing’). This construction is rare; more often the formally same pattern is used for parametric concessive

conditional clauses ('whatever you do, ...'), while the continuity of states is more often expressed with a correlative construction with two identical verb forms (*kā stāv, tā stāv* 'is still standing'). As states are supposed to continue, this construction highlights the fact that no change of situation has appeared.

On this background the continuative construction V *vienā V-šanā* is the best candidate for a continuative gram in Latvian. The continuative meaning is an invariant part of the construction, and it shows features that are cross-linguistically typical for this category, such as a strong preference for durative activities.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has shown that the Latvian continuative construction is not a mere stylistic device, but a regular means for expressing continuative aspect. As such, it should find its place in descriptive grammars of Latvian, even if it is not particularly frequent and appears mostly in colloquial registers. It should also be taken into account in typological studies of this category.

The meaning of the construction comes about due to the combination of two of its elements: first, a phrase containing an action noun and the numeral *viens* 'one' in the locative, and second the fact that the action noun contains the same verbal root as the predicate to which it is added. For both elements there are parallels in various other languages world-wide, but the closest parallels were found in areally close languages, Finnish and German. There are of course also parallels in the genetically closest language, Lithuanian. The combination of these two elements seems to be unique to Latvian.

The analysis of a sample of 129 instances of the construction extracted from a corpus proved that the construction displays important features of grammatical constructions: it is schematic, syntagmatically fixed and paradigmatically open to a wide range of verbs. Lexical semantic preferences and the strong preference for activities do not contradict its grammatical status, but are in line with the finding of Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca (1994, 174) that categories such as iterative, continuative and frequentative are "appropriate only with verbs of certain lexical semantics".

The features characterising the construction became still more apparent in a comparison with other Latvian constructions with verbal repetition in Section 4. When put together with data from other languages (as briefly reported in Section 2), these results shed new light on constructions involving repetition in general as well as on cognate constructions in particular. Repetition is a technique (or a set of techniques) found in many if not all languages of the world with a common range of pragmatic, semantic, and grammatical functions attested in various unrelated languages. Iteration (repetition of word forms) and morphological reduplication are different types of repetition, and cognate constructions represent a third type distinct from both. Like iteration, they involve repetition across word boundaries, but the repeated element is part of a specific morphological form and the parts of the constructions are tightly bound together. Like reduplication, their meaning is more specific than that of iteration and they typically show lexical-semantic preferences.

In a very inspiring paper, Utz Maas (2007) relates the emergence of grammaticised structures from repetitive constructions in Semitic languages to stylistic considerations in language planning (*Sprachkultur*) as well as to structural characteristics of languages (*Sprachbau*). Regarding the first, he argues that following a Latin tradition, (western) European standard languages have largely banned repetitive structures, while in the Arabic tradition repetition is an acknowledged means widely used in the classical literature. In the standardisation of Latvian and Lithuanian, western European models did have an important influence, but at the same time constructions known from oral language use, especially in oral verbal art, retained a certain prestige as coming from the “real” language of the people (as opposed to written language varieties which were often heavily influenced by the language of the colonisers). Thanks to this situation, we find several cognate constructions in modern Baltic languages which have no parallels in western European standard languages. Regarding the second aspect, structural characteristics, the richer inventory of morphological categories and forms may support cognate constructions in Baltic languages when compared to languages such as English, German, or French. Some of the Latvian constructions discussed in this paper have parallels in Lithuanian, and a comparative investigation of cognate constructions in both Baltic languages seems to be a fruitful topic for further studies, as would be a comparison of Baltic and Finnic languages.

The acceptance of constructions as stylistic means is a prerequisite for their use and further development. From a diachronic point of view stylistics is not opposed to grammar. In a synchronic analysis, one may consider in how far a given construction functions as a stylistic device and in how far it has specific functions in discourse or expresses grammatical categories.

More research on different aspects of cognate constructions across languages will certainly reveal more interesting characteristics of this technique. Luckily, the Baltic languages have a lot to offer to such research.

## ABBREVIATIONS

1, 2, 3 — first, second, third person, ACC — accusative, ACN — action noun, ADV — adverbial, CVB — converb, DAT — dative, DEF — definite (article or suffix), DEM — demonstrative, DO — direct object, F — feminine, FIN — finite, FUT — future, GEN — genitive, IDEF — indefinite (article or suffix), INE — inessive(case), INF — infinitive, ITER — iterative, LOC — locative, M — masculine, NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, PFX — prefix, PL — plural, POSS — possessive (suffix), PP — passive participle, PRS — present, PRT — partitive (case), PST — past, PTC — particle, PVB — preverb, Q — question particle, RFL — reflexive, RPOSS — reflexive possessive pronoun, SG — singular, SUB — subject, V — verb, VN — verbal noun

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