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The refinitivization of the infinitive in Finnish

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An attempt is made to arrange chronologically the particular stages of the diachronic process of the *refinitivization* of the infinitive based on their synchronic reflections observable in the contemporary Finnish language. The paper begins with an overview of the morphological and syntagmatic properties of various Finnish infinitive types, and a presentation of the adopted *taxonomic* approach as opposed to the transformational one. The main part contains a discussion on the details and the substantiation of the particular proposed chronological arrangement of the stages of the process of refinitivization of the infinitive in Finnish. A total of six stages of this process are distinguished, as a consequence of which the connection between the infinitive and finite verb tightens to such an extent that the finite verb metamorphoses into an auxiliary verb, whereas the infinitive metamorphoses into the only carrier of lexical meaning in a new compound verb form.

Keywords: Finnish verb, finite verb, infinite verb, infinitive, verbal noun, grammaticalization

1. Introduction

Verb forms are generally divided into two classes: finite and infinite. Finite verb forms are capable of building, with the appropriate nominal form, a (minimal) sentence. Infinite verb forms lack this potential. The infinitive is one of the subclasses of infinite verb, besides the participle, gerund, etc. The lack of the potential for building a sentence in the case of the infinitive is usually derived from the fact that it lacks the formal exponents of the appropriate meanings characteristic for finite verb forms, particularly person, number, (absolute) tense and mood. The great Danish linguist Otto Jespersen challenged this simplistic approach to the infinitive. In his view, in an English sentence of the type:

(1) *I like {boys to be quiet}.*

it is not the word *boys* which fulfills the function of the direct object of the transitive verb *TO LIKE*, but the whole infinitival phrase *boys to be quiet*. Since the phrase *boys to be quiet* contains “two ideas which must necessarily remain separate”, it resembles in many respects a sentence. Jespersen counts both the sentence *Boys are quiet* and the infinitival phrase *boys to be quiet* among the syntactic class of so-called *nexuses*, as opposed to *junctions* of the type *quiet boys*. Recapitulating his considerations of the infinitive, Jespersen emphasizes that it has approached the finite verb morphologically and syntactically, though to varying degrees in different languages (Jespersen 1965: 108-144; cf. also Bogusławski & Drzazgowska 2016: 247-249).

Further research on the infinitive has furnished a vast empirical body of material confirming that as a result of ongoing grammaticalization processes the syntagm consisting of a finite verb and infinitive displays a cross-linguistic tendency to metamorphose via a compound predicate into a new simple finite verb form. The formation of such a verb form presupposes the following changes:

- (i) the old finite verb successively loses its lexical meaning in the process called *auxiliarization*, whereas
- (ii) the infinitive metamorphoses into the only carrier of lexical meaning, the actual lexical root of the new finite verb form (Heine 1993: 27-87).

To illustrate this, let us compare the following Latin example (2) and its successor in modern Spanish (3) (cf. Menéndez Pidal 1987: 322-324):

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| (2) <i>Canta/re</i> <i>habe/o.</i>
<i>sing-INF</i> <i>have-I SG</i>
‘I have to sing.’ | > | (3) <i>Cantar/é.</i>
<i>sing-FUTUR I SG</i>
‘I will sing.’ |
|---|---|--|

Both the syntactically exceptional (i.e. nexoidal/non-junctional) character of certain types of infinitival phrases and the tendency of the infinitive to merge with the finite verb into a new simple finite verb form seem to be facets of one superior phenomenon which could be named *refinitivization* of the infinitive. It is obvious that the refinitivization of the infinitive is a diachronic process. The language changes which take place within a diachronic process hardly ever spread in such a way as to erase the previous changes completely. Because of this, the structure of natural languages seems to be rather a result of the successive piling up of the effects of changes with different ranges (cf. Lehtinen & Laitinen 1997: 11-12). In the present work, by means of morphosyntactic-semantic analysis of different manifestations of the infinitive in contemporary Finnish, an attempt will be made to arrange the synchronic reflections of the respective stages of the refinitivization of the infinitive according to the chronological order of their appearance.

2. The system of Finnish infinitives – general information

In the contemporary Finnish language there are distinguished up to five infinitives. They are traditionally labeled with ordinal numbers: I, II, III, IV and V (cf. Setälä 1926: 105-124; Kettunen & Vaula 1960: 98-102; Siro 1964: 88-89; Dubrovina 1972: 5; Hakulinen L. 1979: 254-256; Hakulinen A. et al. 2004: 489-490). Each Finnish infinitive has its own characteristic markers:

I	-a-, -ä-, -da-, -dä-, -la-, -lä-, -na-, -nä-, -ra-, -rä-, -ta-, -tä-	(-TA ¹)
II	-e-, -de-, -le-, -ne-, -re-, -te-	(-Te-)
III	-ma-, -mä-	(-mA-)
IV	-minen-, -mis-	(-miNEN-)
V	-mais-, -mäis-	(-mAis-)

It is well known that, historically, infinitives in Indo-European languages are petrified case forms of old verbal substantives (Brugman 1916: 888-906). The same holds even more transparently for Finno-Ugric languages (Ravila 1945; Uotila 1946; Rätsep 1955; Stipa 1960: 60-62, Saukkonen 1965: 5; Korhonen 1981: 289; Kiuru 1989; Bartens 1999: 144-152; 2000: 228-232). In Finnish, in spite of the fact that the case paradigm of each infinitive has undergone lesser or greater defectivization, the use of many particular infinitival forms still follows strictly the case rectional patterns otherwise valid for nouns. Let us compare:

- (4) *Minä lähden Suome/en.*
Finland-ILLAT
 ‘I am going to Finland.’
- (5) *Minä lähden Suome/en {opiskele/ma/an suomea}.*
Finland-ILLAT learn-III INF-ILLAT
 ‘I am going to Finland {to learn Finnish}.’

One of the specific features of Finnish infinitives is that many of their forms are furnishable with markers of an affixal nature carrying meanings characteristic for Finnish finite verbs, such as person, voice and number (tense distinctions are less clear). The following table presents the morphological structure of the five Finnish infinitives, including the infinitive markers as well as the non-zero affixal markers of voice, number (plural – only in the case of the V infinitive), case and person:

¹ The abstract overall form of all allomorphs of each infinitive is given in parentheses. Capitals denote a possible consonantal/vocal alternation.

Case	I INF	II INF	III INF	IV INF	V INF
nominative				<i>-minen</i>	
genitive					
partitive				<i>-mis-tA</i>	
accusative					
illative			<i>-mA-An</i>		
inessive		<i>-Te-ssA(-An)</i> <i>-TA²-e-ssA</i>	<i>-mA-ssA</i>		
elative			<i>-mA-stA</i>		
allative					
adessive			<i>-mA-llA</i>		<i>-mais-i-llA-An</i>
ablative					
translative	<i>-TA-kse-en³</i>				
essive					
abessive			<i>-mA-ttA(*-An)</i>		
instructive		<i>-Te-n(*-Ni)</i>	<i>-mA-n(*-Ni)</i> <i>-TA-mA-n</i>		
comitative					
lative	<i>-TA^k</i>				

As far as the syntagmatic use of the Finnish infinitives is concerned, the first feature that deserves attention is the extreme differences in the connectivity of their particular forms with finite verbs, conditioned by the (lexical) meaning of the latter.

At one of these extremes lie infinitive forms whose connectivity with finite verbs is not subject to limitations. At the opposite extreme are infinitive forms whose connectivity with finite verbs is strictly limited. Because of the high degree of auxiliarization of the finite verbs which can be bound with these infinitive forms, it seems to be hardly possible to ascribe them lexical meaning. There are in fact only three such auxiliary verbs:

- (i) *OLLA* *OLLA -mAis-i-llA-An* ‘to be about to (do something)’,
 OLLA -miNEN ‘to have to (do something)’,
 (ii) *KÄYDÄ* *KÄYDÄ -miNEN* ‘to have to (do something)’,
 (iii) *PITÄÄ* *PITÄÄ -mA-n* ‘to have to (do something)’,
 PITÄÄ -TA-mA-n ‘to have to be (done)’.

² The affixal voice markers (*-TA-*) appear only in case of 1) the inessive of the II infinitive and 2) the instructive of the III infinitive (bolded in the table). The forms of the I infinitive furnished with a non-zero voice marker are considered nowadays as obsolete or dialectal (Penttilä 1963: 491).

³ The affixal person markers (*-en*, *-An*, *-Ni*) appear only in case of 1) the translative of the I infinitive, 2) the inessive of the II (active) infinitive, and 3) the adessive of the V infinitive. The forms of 1) the instructive of the II infinitive, 2) the abessive of the III infinitive and 3) the instructive of the (active) III infinitive furnished with person markers are considered as rudimentary (marked by an asterisk).

The remaining infinitive forms can be characterized as lying in the space between these two clear-cut extremes. Let us consider this tripartite classification in more detail:

- (i) No limitations:
 - (a) the translative of the I infinitive (-*TA-kse-en*),
 - (b) the inessive of the II infinitive (-*Te-ssA(-An)*, -*TA-e-ssA*),
 - (c) the instructive of the II infinitive (-*Te-n*),
 - (d) the adessive of the III infinitive (-*mA-llA*),
 - (e) the abessive of the III infinitive (-*mA-ttA*),
- (ii) Moderate limitations:
 - (a) the lative of the I infinitive (-*TA-l*),
 - (b) the illative of the III infinitive (-*mA-An*),
 - (c) the inessive of the III infinitive (-*mA-ssA*),
 - (d) the elative of the III infinitive (-*mA-stA*),
- (iii) Strict limitations:
 - (a) the instructive of the III infinitive (-*mA-n*, -*TA-mA-n*),
 - (b) the nominative of the IV infinitive (-*minen*),
 - (c) the partitive of the IV infinitive (-*mis-TA*),
 - (d) the adessive of the V infinitive (-*mAis-i-llA-An*).

In the 1st and 2nd group there can be distinguished special uses of the relevant infinitives that are characteristic for the 3rd group, but not *vice versa*. Let us mention some less disputable examples: (1a) the translative of the I infinitive as in: *Ovi ei ota avautu-akseen* ‘The door does not let itself be open’ (Ikola 1978: 61-62), *Tauti menee, jos on mennäkseen* ‘The disease goes away if it is to go away’ (ibid. 65-66), (1e) the abessive of the III infinitive as in: *Ole itkemättä* ‘Don’t be crying’, *Talo on rakentamatta* ‘The house is not built’ (cf. Dubrovina 1972: 198-199), (2a) the lative of the I infinitive as in: *Huomenna tulee vastata* ‘Tomorrow will come the moment to answer’ (ibid. 59-60), (2c) the inessive of the III infinitive as in: *Hän on lukemassa* ‘He is reading’ (ibid. 170).

3. The transformational vs. taxonomic approach

Infinitives can be conceived of as functional equivalents of finite verb forms in more complex structures. For example, the sentence:

- (5) *Minä lähdän Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea.*
 ‘I am going to Finland to learn Finnish.’

communicates in relevant respects the same as is communicated by the sequence (a text consisting) of the sentences:

- (4) *Minä lähdän Suomeen.* ja (6) *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa.*
 ‘I am going to Finland.’ ‘and’ ‘I will learn Finnish in Finland.’

An adherent of the transformational approach (cf. Chomsky 1970; Ambrazas 1979) would claim that the sentence *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea* comes into being as a result of the merger of the sentences *Minä lähden Suomeen* and *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa*. The sentence *Minä lähden Suomeen* would be referred to as the ‘embedding sentence’, and *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa* as the ‘embedded sentence’. The embedding sentence preserves the finiteness of the verb, whereas the embedded sentence converts its finite verb into the infinitive. The procedure of embedding also entails the following change: from the embedded sentence there are removed the words which are homoreferential with words already occurring in the embedding sentence:

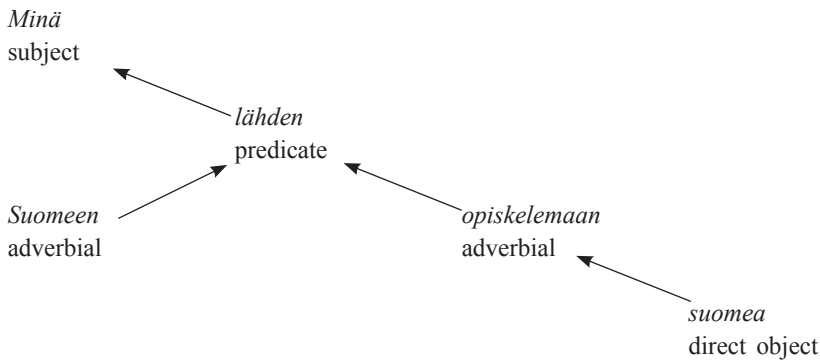
embedding sentence:	<i>Minä</i>	<i>lähden</i>		<i>Suomeen.</i>
embedded sentence:	<i>Minä</i>		<i>opiskelen</i>	<i>Suomessa</i> <i>suomea.</i>

The approach adopted in the present work will be different. First of all it should be noted that all three analyzed sentence types coexist in the present synchronic state of the Finnish language on the same taxonomic level. None of them is more or less abstract than the others in the literal sense (cf. Bolzano 1978; Itkonen 1991: 58). What differentiates the sentence with the infinitive *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea* from the sentences *Minä lähden Suomeen* and *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa* is its higher degree of syntactic complexity, if only for the trivial reason that it contains three verb complements (*Suomeen*, *opiskelemaan* and *suomea*) instead of two (*suomea*, *Suomessa*) or one (*Suomeen*).

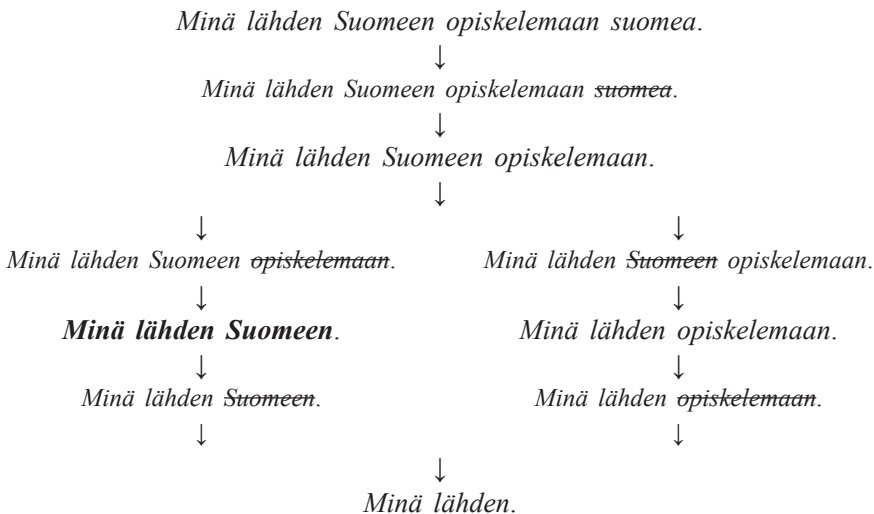
Comparing the monopredicative sentences *Minä lähden Suomeen* and *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa* it can be stated that within a polypredicative sentence of the type *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea* the monopredicative sentence *Minä lähden Suomeen* finds more equivalents, both lexical and grammatical, than the monopredicative sentence *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa*. Let us compare:

polypredicative sentence	<i>Minä</i>	<i>lähden</i>	<i>Suomeen</i>	<i>opiskelemaan</i>	<i>suomea.</i>
monopredicative sentence	<i>Minä</i>	<i>lähden</i>	<i>Suomeen.</i>		
	lexical and grammatical equivalent	lexical and grammatical equivalent	lexical and grammatical equivalent		
polypredicative sentence	<i>Minä</i>	<i>lähden</i>	<i>Suome/en</i>	<i>opiskele/ma/an</i>	<i>suomea.</i>
monopredicative sentence	<i>Minä</i>		<i>Suome/ssa</i>	<i>opiskele/n</i>	<i>suomea.</i>
	lexical and grammatical equivalent		lexical equivalent	lexical equivalent	lexical and grammatical equivalent

The syntactic structure of the polypredicative sentence *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea* may be depicted as follows:



Apart from the discussed higher degree of lexical-grammatical equivalency between the sentences *Minä lähden Suomeen* and *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea* than between the sentences *Minä opiskelen suomea Suomessa* and *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea*, it is worth turning attention to the fact that the operation of cancellation applied successively over the sentence *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea*, beginning with determinationally the most remote word from the sentence core (subject–predicate) (cf. Bańczerowski 1980: 106), yields at some point only one of the aforementioned monopredicative sentences, i.e. the sentence *Minä lähden Suomeen*. Let us visualize this by means of the following scheme:



Taking into consideration all that has been said, a sentence of the type *Minä lähden Suomeen opiskelemaan suomea* could be divided into two syntagms: *Minä lähden Suomeen* and *opiskelemaan suomea*. *Minä lähden Suomeen* happens to be a full-fledged sentence, whereas *opiskelemaan suomea* constitutes a so-called *infinitival phrase* in which the in-

<i>sinä/Ø</i>	‘you’	↔	<i>sinu/n (-si)</i>	‘your’,
<i>jatkuva/sti</i>	‘constantly’	↔	<i>jatkuva/an</i>	‘to constant’,
<i>jaarittelle/t</i>	‘(you) witter’	↔	<i>jaarittelle/mise/e/si</i>	‘to your wittering’,
<i>vain</i>	‘only’	↔	<i>vain</i>	‘only’,
<i>sinu/n (-si)</i>	‘your’	↔	<i>sinu/n (-si)</i>	‘your’,
<i>työ/stä/si</i>	‘about your work’	↔	<i>työ/stä/si</i>	‘about your work’.

The occurrence of sentences of the type *Olen tottunut jatkuvaan jaarittelemiseen vain työstä* ‘I got used to constant wittering only about work’, with no lexical exponent of the [AGENT] of wittering, does not undermine what has been said above about phrases containing verbal substantives. The verbal substantive *jaaritteleminen* ‘wittering’ opens a potential syntactic slot for it.

In contrast to phrases containing verbal substantives, infinitival phrases reveal some lexical loss in comparison with their sentential equivalents, for example:

- (17) *Sinä tulet tähän.*
‘You come here.’
- (14) *Sinä jatkuvasti jaarittelet vain sinun työstäsi.*
‘You are wittering constantly only about your work.’
- (18) *Sinä tulet tähän {jatkuvasti jaarittelemaan vain sinun työstäsi}.*
‘You come here {to witter constantly only about your work}.’

The infinitival phrase *jatkuvasti jaarittelemaan vain sinun työstäsi* is found to be only a partial lexical equivalent of the sentence *Sinä jatkuvasti jaarittelet vain sinun työstäsi*, since it does not contain the lexical exponent of the [AGENT] of wittering.

The absence or presence of the discussed lexical loss within the analyzed phrase types seems to be a reflection of different degrees of establishment of common predicate-argument frames between the verbal substantive/infinitive and the finite verb.

In the sentence containing a verbal substantive the intensity of the establishment of common predicate-argument frames is potentially zero, because both the verbal substantive and finite verb retain the lexical exponents of their arguments in their direct syntactic environment:

[AGENT]– <i>JAARITELLA</i> –[THEME]	cf. <i>sinun jaarittelemisesi työstä</i> ‘your wittering about the work’
[AGENT]– <i>TOTTUA</i> –[GOAL]	cf. <i>Minä olen tottunut jaarittelemiseesi</i> ‘I got used to your wittering’

Again, the occurrence of sentences of the type *Minä en pidä jaarittelemisestä* ‘I do not like to witter’, containing the verbal substantive, with the common lexical exponent of the [AGENT] of both liking and wittering in the direct syntactic environment of the finite verb, does not undermine what has been said about phrases containing verbal substantives. The verbal substantive *jaaritteleminen* ‘wittering’ opens a potential syntactic slot for a lexically different [AGENT] of wittering: *Minä en pidä sinun jaarittelemisestä* ‘I do not like your wittering’.

with the infinitive), which in the singular number happen to be largely syncretic (cf. Bielecki 2015: 103-112). After the finite verb *Annan* had been deprived of any substantival complement, it was determined syntactically directly only by some other verb (*VALUA* ‘to flow’). As a result of such a junction of two verbs the meaning of the finite verb became more abstract, changing from ‘to give’ to ‘to let/allow’. The finite verb *Annan* acquires different meanings depending on whether or not it is determined syntactically only by the infinitive. In the case of verbal substantives, analogous dependencies do not occur. The substitution of *jaarittelemisen* ‘withering’ by, for example, the noun *meteli* ‘noise’ in the sentence *Olen tottunut jaarittelemiseen* ‘I got used to the withering’ does not evoke a change of the meaning of the finite verb *TOTTUA* (*Olen tottunut meteliin* ‘I got used to the noise’). The described moment of occurrence of the change of meaning of the finite verb in connection with the infinitive can be regarded as the real starting point of the auxiliarization of the finite verb and a key turning point in the refinitivization of the infinitive.

Taking into account all that has been said, it is possible to distinguish the next two stages of the refinitivization of the infinitive:

- (III) **the establishment of common predicate-argument frames between the infinitive and finite verb wherein one argument of the infinitive becomes lexicalized in the direct syntactic environment of the finite verb,**
- (IV) **the establishment of common predicate-argument frames between the infinitive and finite verb wherein one argument of the finite verb becomes lexicalized in the direct syntactic environment of the infinitive, and thus the infinitive becomes potentially the only direct syntactic *determinans* of the finite verb.**

7. The de-eventivization of the finite verb

As has been signaled in the *Introduction*, the auxiliarization of the finite verb in connection with the infinitive leads to loss of the lexical meaning of the finite verb. For example, in a sentence of the type:

- (21) *Hän oli laula/ma/ssa.*
 sing-III INF-INNESS
 ‘He was singing.’

the verb *OLLA* no longer conveys the meaning ‘to be at a certain place/to exist’. That being so, it is deprived of its real eventive references. At first glance, the auxiliary verb *SAADA* ‘can’ seems to behave in an analogous manner. A sentence of the type:

- (22) *Hän sai laula/a^k.*
 sing-I INF-LAT
 ‘He could sing.’

communicates in this precise form only one event, namely the event of singing, which is presented in the light of the deontic modality expressed by the verb *SAADA*. Nevertheless a compound predicate of the type *sai laulaa* ‘could sing’ seems to function in a latent manner differently from a compound predicate of the type *oli laulamassa* ‘was singing’. The propositional content of the sentence *Hän sai laulaa tätä laulua* ‘He could sing this song’ does not differ from the propositional content of *Hän oli laulamassa tätä laulua* ‘He was singing this song’. Both sentences express the same arrangement of things: *HE–SING–THIS–SONG*. However let us take a closer look at the following sentences with the adverb *innokkaasti* ‘eagerly’:

(23) *Hän oli laulamassa tätä laulua innokkaasti.*

‘He was singing this song eagerly.’

(24) *Hän sai laulaa tätä laulua innokkaasti.*

‘He could sing this song eagerly.’

The sentence *Hän oli laulamassa tätä laulua innokkaasti* implies that the eagerness to sing is an individual feature of the singer. The sentence *Hän oli innokas laulamaan tätä laulua* ‘He was eager to sing this song’, perceived as its paraphrase, seems to corroborate this. In turn, the sentence *Hän sai laulaa tätä laulua innokkaasti* does not contain such an implication. It communicates that eagerness was a property of the manner of singing allowed by somebody else. The singer himself did not necessarily have to be eager to sing.

This discrepancy may result from the fact that in spite of the auxiliarization of the verb *SAADA* it still retains some traces of its eventiveness. In a sentence of the type:

(25)	<i>Hän</i>	<i>sai</i>	<i>luva/n</i>	<i>isä/ltä.</i>
	[AGENT–BENEFICIENT]		[PATIENT]	[DONOR–AGENT]
	<i>he–NOM</i>		<i>permission–ACC</i>	<i>father–ABL</i>
	‘He received permission from his father.’			

where *SAADA* still occurs as an autosemantic verb, the [AGENT] of receiving is at the same time the [BENEFICIENT] of the giving of permission (*HÄN* ‘he’). De-eventivization of the verb *SAADA* in a sentence of the type *Hän sai laulaa tätä laulua innokkaasti* manifests itself by the fact that both the [DONOR] and simultaneously the [AGENT] of giving (*ISÄ* ‘father’) and the [PATIENT] of giving (*LUPA* ‘permission’) are not lexicalizable. Nevertheless the lexicalizable [AGENT] of singing seems to have retained its role as a [BENEFICIENT] of the giving of permission, which is not the case with a predicate of the type *oli laulamassa* ‘he was singing’. The different implications concerning the range of reference of the adverb *innokkaasti* ‘eagerly’ resulting from the sentences *Hän oli laulamassa tätä laulua innokkaasti* and *Hän sai laulaa tätä laulua innokkaasti* are seemingly a consequence of different diathetic structures underlying these sentences (cf. also Chojak 2009: 131). *Hän* in *Hän oli laulamassa tätä laulua innokkaasti* encodes only the [AGENT] of singing, whereas *Hän* in *Hän sai laulaa tätä laulua innokkaasti* encodes both the [AGENT]

of singing and the [BENEFICIENT] of the giving by a non-lexicalizable [DONOR] of a non-lexicalizable permission to sing.

The two last stages identified according to the presented line of reasoning can be described as follows:

- (V) **the partial de-eventivization of the finite verb manifesting through its latent diathetic functioning its paradigmatic connection to a fully eventive autosemantic verb,**
- (VI) **the total de-eventivization of the finite verb.**

8. Summary and conclusions

Observations made about many natural languages confirm that the structure of these languages is a result of the successive piling up of the effects of diachronic changes with different ranges. The aim of this paper was to arrange the synchronic reflections of the respective stages of the phenomenon of the *refinitivization* of Finnish infinitives according to the chronological order of their appearance, based on material excerpted from the contemporary Finnish language.

In the sections devoted to more general information there was first provided an overview of the morphological and syntagmatic properties of Finnish infinitives. A description was also given of the adopted *taxonomic* approach, standing in a kind of opposition to the transformational approach. The distinguishing phenomena resulting from the substantival and verbal nature of the infinitive was evaluated as significant for the analysis being undertaken.

The process of the refinitivization of Finnish infinitives was observed from the point of view of three phenomena:

- (i) the connectivity of infinitives with finite verbs conditioned by the (lexical) meaning of the latter,
- (ii) the establishment of common predicate-argument frames between the infinitive and finite verb, and
- (iii) the de-eventivization of the finite verb.

A total of six stages of the process were distinguished:

- (i) the disappearance of such case forms of the infinitive which in their primary function encode the obligatory complements of finite verbs,
- (ii) the disappearance of such case forms of the infinitive which encode the facultative complements of finite verbs of adverbial character,
- (iii) the establishment of common predicate-argument frames between the infinitive and finite verb wherein one argument of the infinitive becomes lexicalized in the direct syntactic environment of the finite verb,

- (iv) the establishment of common predicate-argument frames between the infinitive and finite verb wherein one argument of the finite verb becomes lexicalized in the direct syntactic environment of the infinitive, and thus the infinitive becomes potentially the only direct syntactic *determinans* of the finite verb,
- (v) the partial de-eventivization of the finite verb, manifesting through its latent diathetic functioning its paradigmatic connection to a fully eventive autosemantic verb, and
- (vi) the total de-eventivization of the finite verb.

As a result of this process the substantival nature of the infinitive successively gives way to its verbal nature. The connection between the infinitive and finite verb is tightened. In the final stage of the process the finite verb loses its autosemanticity by metamorphosing into an auxiliary verb. In turn, the infinitive metamorphoses into the only carrier of lexical meaning in a new compound verb form.

Further potential stages in which the infinitive loses its linear separability from the finite verb, while its affix is deprived of the function of signaling syntagmatic relations, seem to be irrelevant to the analyzed phenomenon, because in such a case we are no longer dealing with an infinitive at all. The infinitive is after all considered to be a *word*, independently of its more or less free syntactic status.

I hope that this relatively short paper may serve as a contribution to a more profound, detailed and subtle investigation into such a complicated and – as it seems – still not satisfactorily resolved matter as the morphosyntax and semantics of the infinitive, both language-specific and general.

Abbreviations and symbols

Ø	(morphological) zero	ILLAT	illative (case)
[AGENT]	verb arguments	INESS	inessive (case)
{}	syntactic group	INF	infinitive
>	historical change	LAT	lative (case)
†	historical reconstruction	NOM	nominative (case)
ABL	ablative (case)	OLLA	a word as an abstract set of actual word(form)s
ACC	accusative (case)	PART	partitive (case)
ADESS	adessive (case)	SG	singular (number)
ELAT	elative (case)	SUBST	substantivizing affix
FUTUR	future (tense)	TRANSL	translative (case)
GEN	genitive (case)		

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