

## On the semantic and functional variation of *as*-parentheticals in English and Lithuanian

AURELIJA USONIENĖ & ANNA RUSKAN

*Vilnius University, Lithuania*

*As*-parentheticals have been attested cross-linguistically and their formal and functional properties have been analysed in English, Danish, German, Polish and Lithuanian (Quirk et al. 1985; Potts 2002; Brinton 2008; Bogusławski 2008; Blakemore 2009; Usonienė 2013). Although these parentheticals reveal “cross-linguistic consistency and robustness” (Potts 2002, 686), they can be subject to formal and functional variation in different types of discourse across languages. The current study focuses on two structural types of *as*-parentheticals, namely *as V-ed* (*as shown/reported/noted*) and *as PRN V* (*as I say/said, as you know, as we saw/noted*) in English and Lithuanian spoken and written discourse. The core element in the given is either a non-finite or finite perception, communication or cognition verb, as illustrated in the following examples:

- (1) *This may not satisfy common law and equitable requirements which, **as seen above**, may require full disclosure.* (BNC-ACAD)
- (2) (SP:PS65G) *There are rumours that war is imminent, so presumably it would be dangerous to go now?*  
(SP:PS66H) *Yes, I think, I mean, it varies from day to day, but **as you say** the rumours at the moment are that the (unclear) is being upped a bit <...>* (BNC-SPOKEN)
- (3) ***Kaip žinoma***, *originalių lietuviškų knygų XIX a. pradžioje dar nebuvo, <...>* (CorALit) ‘As known, there were no original Lithuanian books at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.’
- (4) *Lietuviai, **kaip žinom**, krikščionybę pradėjo priimti tik keturioliktame <...> amžiuje.* (CCLL)  
‘Lithuanians, as (we) know, have started to adopt Christianity only in the 14<sup>th</sup> <...> century.’

The purpose of the study is to analyse functional distribution of *as*-parentheticals in English and Lithuanian along with their qualitative and quantitative parameters. The main features for comparison are syntactic independence, “non-restrictive” meaning, syntactic mobility, internal syntax of the parentheticals (Kaltenböck et al. 2011), their frequency and type of discourse. The study is corpus-based and the data have been collected from the sub-corpora of spoken, academic and newspaper registers in the British National Corpus (BNC) and two Lithuanian corpora: the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (CCLL) and the Corpus of Academic Lithuanian (CorALit).

The preliminary findings suggest that both in spoken and written English and Lithuanian, *as*-parentheticals can display epistemic qualifications (evidential meaning) and a range of discourse functions; an interaction feature of reader-writer engagement among them (Hyland 2008). *As PRN V* parentheticals are more frequent in spoken discourse, while *as V-ed* parentheticals are most common in written discourse.

### Data sources

BNC British National Corpus (<http://corpus.byu.edu/bnc/>)

CCLL Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (<http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/>)

CorALit Corpus Academicum Lithuanicum (<http://coralit.lt/>)

## References

- Blakemore, Diane. 2009. On the relevance of parentheticals. *Actes d'IDP* 09.
- Bogusławski, Andrzej. 2008. O pewnym wykładniku równoważności lokucyjnej. In *Lexikalische Evidenzialitätsmarker in slavischen Sprachen* ed. by Björn Wiemer. 67–93. München – Wien: Verlag Otto Sagner.
- Brinton, Laurel J. 2008. *The Comment Clause in English: Syntactic Origins and Pragmatic Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hyland, Ken. 2008. As can be seen: lexical bundles and disciplinary variation. *English for Specific Purposes* 27. 4–21.
- Kaltenböck, Gunther, Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva. 2011. On thetical grammar. *Studies in Language* 35(4). 852–897.
- Potts, Christopher. 2002. The syntax and semantics of *as*-parentheticals. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 20. 623–689.
- Quirk, Randolph, Sidney Greenbaum, Geoffrey Leech and Jan Svartvik. 1985. *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London, New York: Longman.
- Usoniené, Aurelija. 2013. Are *as/so*-parentheticals evidential? *Book of abstracts: 46<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of Societas Linguistica Europaea*. University of Split.