

SUBJECT CASE ALTERNATION IN LATVIAN AND ESTONIAN EXISTENTIAL CLAUSES

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Abstract. In Latvian and Estonian existential clauses, the subject's case form alternates between nominative vs. genitive (in Latvian) and nominative vs. partitive (in Estonian). This article is a study of the case-alternation systems of existential clauses and related clause types, locative and possessive clauses in these languages. It includes a corpus-based analysis of Latvian existential clauses that is being compared with Estonian corpus-based findings on similar clause types in Estonian.*

Keywords: nominative, genitive, partitive, negation, Latvian, Estonian

1. Introductory remarks

Existential clauses constitute a special syntactic, semantic and pragmatic clause type whose main communicative aim is to state the existence of something or existence of something in a location (e.g. Holvoet 2005, Kalėdaitė 2002, 2012, Partee, Borschev 2007, Paducheva 2008, Erelt 2017a: 84–86, Erelt et al. 2017: 243–252). Most often the predicate of existential clauses in both Latvian and Estonian is the lexical verb 'be'. There has been a continuing discussion as to the question of whether three different clause types (existential, locative, possessive) are to be distinguished in Latvian and also whether they all are actually varieties of a single (existential) clause type, describing location, possession and the like (for further discussion on this topic, see, for example, Metuzāle-Kangere, Boiko 2001, Kalnača, Lokmane 2018). There are languages where each clause type has its own unique morphosyntactic construction or uses verbs with a different lexical meaning (e.g. Creissels 2014). The subject's definiteness/indefiniteness and other referential properties tend to vary in different clause types as well. There are also languages in which there is an absence of unique morphosyntactic markers allowing one to distinguish existential clauses from locative and possessive clauses (e.g. Myler 2014). Although Estonian existential and possessive clause types have a lot in common, Estonian grammars distinguish them as separate (Erelt 2017a: 86). Estonian locative clauses, on the contrary, belong to the normal (unmarked) clause type.

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Although Latvian and Estonian are not genetically related (Latvian is a member of the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family, Estonian is a member of the Finnic branch of the Uralic language family) they are members of the Circum-Baltic language area and show noticeable similarities (e.g. Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Wälchli 2001).

We examine Latvian and Estonian to determine whether there are any formal features in common which would allow for stating existence or just foregrounding the “existence” meaning for location, possession and other ways of being. More specifically, Latvian and Estonian corpus material will be studied in this article for one of the distinctive features of existential clauses: subject case alternation. This largely includes case choice in affirmative and negative clauses containing the verb ‘be’ in both languages.

The first section of the article gives an overview of existential, locative and possessive clauses and their distinctive features. The second section examines parallels in subject case marking systems in Latvian and Estonian existential clauses. The third section discusses preconditions of case alternation in both languages. The fourth section presents empirical analysis of corpus data in both languages. The conclusion discusses observations from the analysis of Latvian and Estonian existential clauses and compares the results.

The Latvian examples discussed in the article have been taken from “Līdzsvarotais mūsdienu latviešu valodas korpus 2018” (The Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian 2018). While this study was being designed (2016–2017), data from another annotated balanced sub-corpus *miljons2.om* was accessible through the Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian, and as a result, data from *miljons2.om* was used in section 4.1 of this study. Since 2018, all earlier subcorpora have been combined in the newest version of the Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian 2018 and are no longer differentiated. When necessary the sample sentences have been shortened (indicated by [---]).

The article compares Latvian data with the findings of different studies on Estonian existential clauses and unmarked clauses (Metslang 2012, 2013, 2014). These clause types also include possessive clauses as a subtype as well as what can be regarded as Estonian locative clauses (see below). Detailed information about existential clause subject-marking conditions has been drawn from the author’s existential clause corpus (ECC, cf. Metslang 2012). It includes 279 existential clauses that were extracted from the syntactically annotated part of the Corpus of Written Estonian (SAC, 500,000 tokens of fiction texts) according to the criteria described below. The comparison of existential and unmarked clauses is also based on SAC and it originates from (Metslang 2014). This study compared 130 existential clauses with 130 intransitive and 130 transitive clauses that were also found by initial automatic filtering and then manually reviewing all clauses.

2. Latvian and Estonian existentials, locatives and possessives

What is common among existential, locative, and possessive constructions in Latvian and Estonian is the verb *būt* (lv) / *olema* (et) ‘to be’. In Estonian, also other intransitive verbs can occur as predicates of existential clauses, as in (2) below.

As is usually stated in Latvian grammars (e.g., Nītiņa, Grigorjevs 2013: 725–726), the verb *būt* has three lexical meanings: existential, locational and possessive. Below we will look closely into cases where the distinction of the three meanings and, respectively, the three types of constructions is problematic in Latvian. The distinction between existential and locative clauses is not clear-cut (Lagzdiņa 1997, Metuzāle-Kangere, Boiko 2001, Nītiņa, Grigorjevs 2013, Kalnača, Lokmane 2018).

To compare, in Estonian linguistics, these three meanings are attributed to clause types rather than the verb lexeme (cf. Erelt, Metslang 2006). In Estonian linguistics the key criterion that is used to distinguish clause types is subject properties. Clause types are distinguished on the basis of whether the **pragmatic subject** (the topic), the **syntactic subject** (mainly the nominative NP triggering verbal agreement) and the **semantic subject** (the sole/most active argument) coincide or somehow differ (Erelt 2017a: 84–86).

The main communicative aim of the **existential** clause type is to state the existence of something. The new information presented in an existential clause is a referent in a location. According to Peep Nemvalts (2000), Estonian existential clauses denote a situation where there is a location where something exists or does not exist. This location (spatial or temporal) is the theme of the existential clause. A key function of the existential clause is expressing an existential proposition. Most often the predicate of existential clauses is the lexical verb *būt* / *olema*. Existence can be expressed using locative, temporal, experiential, or benefactive complements (e.g., Bondarko 1996, Kalédaitė 2002, Leonetti 2008, Bentley 2015):

(1) Latvian

Un arī dabā viss ir mainīgs –
 and also nature.LOC.F all.NOM.M be.COP.3 changing.NOM.M
tauri reiz bija un tagad vairs nav.
 aurochs.PL.M once be.PST.3 and now any_more not_be.3
 ‘And also in nature everything is changing, there once were aurochs, but not anymore.’ (Nītiņa, Grigorjevs 2013: 463)

(2) Estonian

Peenral on / kasvavad lilled.
 flowerbed.ADE be.3 / grow.3PL flower.NOM.PL
 ‘There are flowers on the flowerbed / There are flowers growing on the flowerbed.’ (Erelt et al. 1993: 14)

Latvian and Estonian rather belong to the typological group of languages that don’t have a clearly distinguishable morphosyntactic construction for each of the meanings (see e.g., Creissels 2014, Myler 2014 about this typology).

In Estonian existential clauses these prototypical subject properties are divided between the core arguments (the existential subject in the existential clause). As one of the marked clause types, the Estonian existential clause is defined by the following three criteria (Metslang 2012: 155, see also Nemvalts 2000).

1. The subject is either in the nominative or partitive (which sometimes co-occurs with the lack of verbal agreement).
2. The function of the clause is to present some referent in a discourse (in a location or the whole situation to characterise the location). If the function of the clause is to say something about the location or situation, not

the subject referent, it is regarded as an existential clause. Sometimes it is necessary to use discourse context to identify this.

3. The predicate verb's existential meaning component is foregrounded. Above all the clause expresses an existence proposition and the expression of more detailed content of the situation is backgrounded in the existential clause (Erelt et al. 2017: 243).

4. Existential clauses without a locative adverbial are called *phenomenon clauses* in Finnish linguistics but the same structure also exists in Estonian.

- (3) Estonian

On igasuguseid inimesi.
be.3 all.kind.PART.PL person.PART.PL
'There are all kinds of people.'

The Finnish grammar stipulates phenomenon clauses with the following properties. The subject usually follows the verb and the topic position is empty. The subject is often an abstract entity. The clause expresses the realisation or prevailing of this abstract situation, state or deed. (Hakulinen et al. 2004: 855–856) In Estonian linguistics they have been included as a secondary subtype in the existential clause category (Nemvalts 2000: 56).

Locative clauses (4), (5) present location of the subject.

- (4) Latvian

Pēc pāris minūtēm vecā atkal ir pagalmā.
after couple minute.DAT.PL old.NOM.F again be.3 yard.LOC.M
'After a couple of minutes the old one **is** back **in the yard**.' (C)

According to Estonian linguistics, locative clauses lack distinct properties that matter from the viewpoint of distinguishing clause types. The topic, the syntactic subject (the nominative NP that triggers verbal agreement) and the semantic subject (the sole/most active argument) all coincide.

- (5) Estonian

Koer on verandal.
dog.NOM be.3 veranda.ADE
'The dog is on the veranda.'

In Estonian linguistics, the **possessive clause** can be regarded as a subtype of the existential clause (Nemvalts 2000, Metslang 2012). Like in existential clauses, in Estonian possessive clauses the prototypical subject properties are divided between the core arguments (the possessor and possessee of the possessive clause). In a prototypical possessive clause the possessee is in the rheme. The most agent-like argument, however, is the possessor, which is the topic of the clause but in the adessive, i.e. not in the subject case (6). In Latvian the possessor is in the dative (7).

- (6) Estonian

Mul on võti.
I.ADE be.3 key.NOM
'**I** have a key.' (B)

(7) Latvian

Bet konkrētu plānu man nebija.
but concrete.GEN.PL.M plan.GEN.PL.M I.DAT not_be.PST.3
'But **I** did not have any concrete plans.' (C)

The case-alternation of Estonian existential and possessive subjects (the possessee arguments) roughly follows the case-alternation pattern of the direct object. It has a totality-partiality system where total case (in the case of objects, the genitive or nominative; in the case of the existential and possessive subjects, only the nominative) alternates with the partitive. The system is primarily used to mark polarity and quantitative definiteness distinctions and it denotes higher vs. lower transitivity as a side effect (cf. Erelt et al. 1993, Erelt et al. 2017). The Estonian partitive is used to express a range of meanings, fulfilling most of the functions attested cross-linguistically for the partitive case (Metslang 2014, see also Luraghi, Kittilä 2014). Compare (2) with (8) and (6) with (9). The nominative is the default case in Estonian existential clauses.

(8) Estonian, existential clause

Peenral kasvab lilli.
flowerbed.ADE grow.3sg flower.PART.PL
'There are **some flowers** growing in the flowerbed.' (Erelt et al. 1993: 14)

(9) Estonian, possessive clause

Mul ei ole võtit.
I.ADE NEG be.CNG key.PART
'I do not have a **key**.' (B)

To **compare** the three clause types in Latvian and Estonian, let us first look at the two pairs of simple examples.

(10a) Latvian, existential clause

Pagalmā ir suns.
garden.LOC.M be.3 dog.NOM.M
'There is a dog in the garden.'

(10b) Estonian, existential clause

Aias on koer.
garden.INE be.3 dog.NOM
'There is a dog in the garden.'

(11a) Latvian, locative clause

Suns ir pagalmā.
dog.NOM.M be.3 garden.LOC.M
'The dog is in the garden.'

(11b) Estonian, locative clause

Koer on aias.
dog.NOM be.3 garden.INE
'The dog is in the garden.'

Relying on the earlier accounts (e.g., Lyons 1999, Kalėdaitė 2002, Partee, Borschev 2007, Leonetti 2008, Metslang 2012, 2014, Creissels 2014, Bentley 2015), one can summarise the typical differences between existential and locative clauses as follows.

Table 1. Comparison of typical features of the existential and locative clauses

Existential clauses	Locative clauses
1) Semantic differences	
<p>The clause says something about the location.</p> <p>The presupposition of the proposition may include that <i>something</i> exists in the location. The fact of the existence or non-existence of an entity in a location is asserted.</p>	<p>The clause says something about the subject referent – characterises it by specifying its location.</p> <p>The existence of the subject referent is presupposed.</p>
2) Word order and information structure	
<p>Typically, the locative adverbial is in the beginning of the clause and it is the Theme (Topic) of the clause.</p> <p><i>Adverbial – predicate – subject.</i></p> <p>In transitional cases the subject can be topicalised, e.g. for contrastive stress.</p>	<p>Typically, the adverbial is post-verbal and is in the Rheme (Focus) of the clause.</p> <p><i>Subject – predicate – adverbial.</i></p> <p>Topicalisation and subject postponing can affect the word order.</p>
3) Definiteness and referentiality of the subject	
<p>The subject is usually indefinite in Latvian and Estonian. The subjects of negative existential clauses are often non-referential.</p>	<p>The subject is usually definite.</p> <p>Latvian has overt definiteness and indefiniteness markers (pronouns and adjectives), however, not all NPs are overtly coded as definite or indefinite. Estonian doesn't have well-developed definiteness or indefiniteness markers. One of the key functions of the partitive is marking quantitative indefiniteness.</p>
4) Case-marking	
<p>Latvian The genitive of negation (12) and the nominative in affirmative clauses (10a).</p> <p>Estonian Apart from a few exceptions, the existential subject is in the partitive in negative existential (13) and possessive (9) clauses. Unlike Latvian, subject case alternation in Estonian affirmative existential and possessive clauses follows a complex set of rules.</p>	<p>Latvian The subject of affirmative locative clauses (11a) is in the nominative. The subject of negative locative clauses bears the nominative (14) (or genitive of negation).</p> <p>Estonian The subject of affirmative (11b) and negative (15) locative clauses is in the nominative.</p>

Indefiniteness is not a mandatory condition for Estonian existential subjects but, statistically, definite existential subjects and indefinite unmarked intransitive clause subjects are very rare (Metslang 2012: 154).

The following examples illustrate how **negation** differs in existential and locative clauses.

- (12) Latvian, genitive of negation in a negative existential clause
Šeit nav vairs pat jūsu pēdu.
 here not_be.3 any_more even you.GEN.PL trace.GEN.PL.F
 ‘There is not even a **trace** of you here anymore.’ (C)
- (13) Estonian, negative existential clause
Mehest endast pole jälgegi.
 man.ELA self.ELA be.NEG trace.PART.CL
 ‘There is no **trace** of the man himself.’ (B)
- (14) Latvian, nominative of negation in a negative locative clause
Viņš nav šeit, viņš ir citur.
 he.NOM not_be.3 here he.NOM be.3 elsewhere
 ‘**He** is not here, he is somewhere else.’ (C)
- (15) Estonian, negative locative clause
Ta ei ole siin.
 s/he.NOM NEG be.CNG here
 ‘**S/he** is not here.’

A different kind of parallelism exists between **locative** and **possessive** constructions. While in Latvian, the possessive constructions contain the possessor noun phrase in the dative (16), quite often a similar meaning is expressed by the locative case (17). Both case forms may combine the semantic roles of the experiencer, possessor, and even location.

- (16) Latvian
Viņiem nebija tā sarūgtinājuma,
 they.DAT.PL.M not_be.PST.3 this.GEN.M embitterment.GEN.M
kas piemita vecākajai paaudzei.
 which be.PST.3 older.LOC.F generation.LOC.F
 ‘**They** did not feel as embittered as the older people.’ (C)
- (17) Latvian
 [---] *bet viņā nebija ne smakas no*
 but he.LOC.M not_be.PST.3 no smell.GEN.F of
uzbrucējiem nepieciešamās viltības.
 attacker.DAT.PL.M necessary.GEN.F cunning.GEN.F
 ‘But there was no trace of the cunning **in him** that is necessary to strikers.’ (C, APS order)

A clause may also contain both the dative of the possessor and the locative of the place:

- (18) Latvian
Man Latvijā ir mazs zemes pleķītis.
 I.DAT Latvia.LOC.F be.3 small.NOM.M land.GEN.F patch.NOM.M
 ‘I have a small patch of land **in Latvia**.’ (C)

Estonian does not have the dative, but instead an elaborate system of locative cases. The locative adverbial of existential and locative clauses is often an adessive (5), (8) or inessive (10b), (11b) phrase. The possessor of possessive clauses and often

also the experiencer of experiential clauses are expressed by an adessive phrase as well, as in (6).

3. Preconditions of subject case alternation

3.1. Negation in Latvian existential clauses

All three features under focus in this study (definiteness/referentiality, the case form of the subject, and word order) only show clustering/clause type related distinctions in **negative clauses** in Latvian. Therefore, this section also only focuses on negative clauses. It should be noted, however, that the factors determining the use of the **genitive of negation** and its **alternation with the nominative** are still understudied in Latvian linguistics. A short account of the variation of the genitive and the nominative with negated existential *būt* (*nebūt* ‘not to be’) in both spoken language and newspaper texts is presented by Sturla Berg-Olsen (2005: 123–124, 186–187), and in detail Andra Kalnača (2002, 2007). Statistical analysis of subject case marking has been carried out; however, the author does not analyse any possible factors triggering the subject case choice. A detailed analysis of different constructions with negated existential *nebūt* ‘not to be’ is provided by Lagzdīņa (1997), but the possible semantic and syntactic factors affecting the choice between nominative and genitive subjects are not systematically analysed.

Formerly, the genitive of indefinite quantity was used with affirmative clause subjects as well:

- (19) *Kam [ir] draugu, tas bagāts.*
 who.DAT [be.3] friend.GEN.PL.M that.NOM.M rich.NOM.M
 ‘The one who has **friends** is rich.’ (Endzelīns, Mīlenbahs 1939: 130)

In the present day, Standard Latvian has abandoned use of the genitive as a marker of indefiniteness and it is only still regularly used with the negative verb *nebūt* (see also Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Wälchli 2001, Holvoet 2011: 18, Leinonen 2016).

Although genitive subject-marking in negation is often considered to be a distinctive feature of Latvian (and Baltic) existential clauses (see, e.g. Holvoet, Grzybowska 2014: 118 about Lithuanian; see also Lindström 2017 on Circum-Baltic), this is not true for Latvian. A clear structural and semantic similarity between negated existential and locative clauses can be seen in the following examples with genitive subjects:

- (20) *Egļu šajā mežā nav.*
 fir-tree.GEN.PL.F this.LOC.M forest.LOC.M not_be.3
 ‘There are no **fir-trees** in this forest.’ (C)
- (21) *Mašīnas tur vairs nebija.*
 car.GEN.F there any_more not_be.PST.3
 ‘The **car** was not there anymore.’ (C)

While (20) can be analysed as existential and (21) as locative, these two negated clauses have the same subject case, word order, and information structure. The key difference between the two can be found in the referentiality of the subject.

It should also be mentioned that in examples (20) and (21) the **word order**, with the negated predicate in the rheme of the clause, is different from the canonical existential and locative clauses (with the predicate in the middle). The reversed order with the adverbial and subject before the predicate is also possible in existential clauses:

- (22) *Šajā upē zivju nav.*
 this.LOC.F river.LOC.F fish.GEN.PL.F not_be.3
 ‘There are no fish in this river.’ (C)

On the other hand, the subject of the negated existential clauses may be referential and definite as well, especially if the subject has ceased to exist (Lagzdiņa 1997: 177):

- (23) [---] *pašu piļu vairs nav.*
 itself.GEN.PL.F castle.GEN.PL.F anymore not_be.3
 ‘The castles do not exist anymore.’ (C)

Similar definite non-nominative subjects are found in Russian (Partee, Borschev 2007: 11) and Estonian, see (24) and (39) below.

- (24) *Ivana ne bylo na lekcij.*
 Ivan.GEN.M NEG be.PST.3N at lecture.GEN.F
 ‘Ivan wasn’t at the lecture.’

In Latvian prescriptive grammar it has been stated that the genitive subject has to be used with the verb *nebūt* “as a strict norm of the standard language” without more closely examining the conditions for this use (Ahero et al. 1959: 395, Nītiņa, Grigorjevs 2013: 349). However, actual language use exhibits different tendencies (e.g. Berg-Olsen 2005, Kalnača 2002, 2007, 2014, Leinonen 2016).

For example, in negated locative clauses we would expect a nominative subject; however, locative-looking clauses may follow the existential model with a genitive subject, as in (25).

- (25) *Meklējiet agrākās ziņas arhīvā,*
 look.IMP.2PL former.ACC.PL.F information.ACC.PL.F archive.LOC.M
ja to nav šeit.
 if they.GEN.PL.F not_be.3 here
 ‘Look for the former information in the archive if **it** is not found here.’ (C)

In example (25) we see the word order which is typical of locative clauses (the adverbial at the end of the clause) and a definite referential subject, which makes us consider the clause to be locative rather than existential.

On the other hand, nominative subjects are often used in negated clauses that have predominantly existential traits:

- (26) [---] *mājās nav internets.*
 home.LOC.PL.F not_be.3 internet.NOM.M
 ‘There is no **internet** at home.’ (C)

Lagzdiņa (1997: 178) suggests that the **structural similarity of negated existential and locative clauses** tends to interrelate with and influence the subject’s case form as well as the semantic interpretation of the clause.

The same parallelism of genitive and nominative subjects is observed in possessive clauses (see also Nītiņa, Grigorjevs 2013: 728, Leinonen 2016):

- (27) [---] *daudziem no viņiem nebija dokumentu.*
 many.DAT.M of they.DAT.M not_be.PST.3 document.GEN.PL.M
 ‘Many of them did not have any **documents**.’ (C)
- (28) *Princīts [suns] tad man nemaz nebija.*
 Princīts.DIM.NOM.M [dog] then I.DAT not_at_all not_be.PST.3
 ‘I did not have **Princīts** [a dog] then.’ (C)

3.2. Negation in Estonian existential clauses

Two important partitive use motivations that are relevant for Estonian existential and possessive clauses are negation and quantitative unboundedness. Apart from some marginal cases discussed below, the locative clause subject only occurs in the nominative. This section focuses on negation-based case rules.

The subject of a negative existential clause is generally in the partitive in Estonian. There are also exceptional negative existential and possessive clause subjects that occur in the nominative and these clauses are on the boundary of unmarked and marked clauses.

The role of a negative existential clause has been regarded in Estonian as

- 1) negating or doubting in the subject referent’s existence or
- 2) expressing the lack of the whole subject referent (a quantitative property) (cf. Nemvalts 2000).

Nemvalts (2000) emphasises that **general negation** in an existential clause negates that the **whole situation** denoted by the clause is true rather than merely negating or doubting in the subject referent’s existence in the location.

- (29) *Kaevanduskäigus ei ole talastikku.*
 mining_pass.INE NEG be.CNG joist.structure.PART
 ‘There is no **joist structure** in the mining pass.’ (Nemvalts 2000: 163; existential clause, indivisible subject referent)
- (30) *Kapis ei ole leiba.*
 cupboard.INE NEG be.CNG bread.PART
 ‘There is no **bread** in the cupboard.’ (Nemvalts 2000: 164; existential clause, divisible subject referent)

The existential clause (30) can negate the existence of both an inclusive and non-inclusive referent (about divisible and indivisible, inclusive and non-inclusive referents see below 3.3) in the location, (31) and (32) respectively. However, the negation’s scope is the whole situation in both cases – something exists somewhere.

- (31) *Kapis on leib.*
 cupboard.INE be.3 bread.NOM
 ‘There is a (loaf of) **bread** in the cupboard.’
- (32) *Kapis on leiba.*
 cupboard.INE be.3 bread.PART
 ‘There is some **bread** in the cupboard.’ (Nemvalts 2000: 164)

Sometimes negative existential (phenomenon) clauses can negate the existence of the subject referent in general without linking it to a particular situation.

- (33) *Ei ole head ilma halvata.*
 NEG be.CNG good.PART without bad.ABE
 ‘There is no good without bad.’ (EED)

In some cases, the partitive can express *constituent negation* so that it is only the subject referent that is in the scope of negation.

- (34) *Leiba ei ole kapis.*
 bread.PART NEG be.CNG cupboard
 ‘The **bread** is not in the cupboard.’ (Nemvalts 2000: 165)

This subject-initial existential clause expresses the presupposition that there is a loaf of bread (or some bread) in the cupboard. The clause negates this presupposition. This suggests that the bread must be somewhere else. The word order and information structure make (34) a marginal existential clause.

Some existential clauses containing constituent negation imply an opposition of two alternative subject referents. As predicted by the general constituent negation rules in Estonian (cf. Erelt 2017b: 190), this is the only clear negative existential clause type that takes a non-partitive subject.

- (35) *Peetril ei ole mitte suvila,*
 Peter.ADE NEG be not summer.cottage.NOM
vaid mõis.
 but manor.house.NOM
 ‘Peter doesn’t have a **summer cottage** but a **manor house**.’ (Erelt et al. 1993: 158)

Nemvalts shows that a partitive subject is pragmatically unacceptable in existential clauses containing constituent negation:

- (36) *?Inimesi ei olnud toas, vaid õues.*
 person.PART.PL NEG be.PTCP.PST indoors.INE but outside.INE
 ‘?There were no **people** indoors but they were outdoors.’ (Nemvalts 2000: 168)

In canonical examples of both the existential and locative clause type, the properties of the subject’s definiteness (and referentiality) and case-marking, as well as clausal word order, are realised together as a cluster as described above. However, there are also many transitional cases where properties of both clause types occur.

Sentence (37) exemplifies a marginal negative existential clause with a nominative subject.

- (37) *Jalgrattateel ei ole peatee.*
 cycle.path.ADE NEG be.CNG main.road.NOM
 ‘There is no **main road** (demarcation) on the cycling path.’ (B, existential clause)

The existential clause structure is suitable for this statement because information-structurally the nominative NP (main road) is new information and needs to be in

the rheme of the clause and the sentence states something about cycle paths – the theme argument. This sentence from the Highway Code is highly contextual and is a hybrid between an existential clause and predicate complement clause (unmarked clause). One could paraphrase this sentence as (38).

- (38) *Jalgrattatee ei ole peatee.*
 cycle.path.NOM NEG be.CNG main.road.NOM
 ‘A cycling path is not a main road.’ (HM, predicate complement clause)

Instead of using a predicate complement structure to define a concept (the cycling path) the Highway Code uses an existential structure instead and refers to a cycling path as a location – perhaps to pick a closer viewpoint to a real traffic situation and put the reader in the place of a cyclist or driver. The predicate complement clause-like meaning is still contextually inferred as indicated by the nominative subject marking (main road).

As mentioned above, a typical negative locative clause takes a nominative subject, for example (15). Similarly to Latvian (see (25) above), a partitive subject version of (15) is equally viable. Example (39) has some features of both existential or locative clauses.

- (39) *Teda ei ole siin.*
 s/he.PART NEG be.CNG here
 ‘**S/he** is not here.’

The meaning difference between (15) and (39) is minor. Huumo and Lindström (2014) find that examples like (39) are closer to unmarked clauses (that is, locative clauses in the sense of this article) and not existential clauses – the partitive subject has spread out of its typical context. Due to the use of the partitive (the less individuated, lowered transitivity case – the default case of direct objects) the actant *teda* in (39) can be interpreted as being less agentive and more an undergoer of the situation than *ta* in (15). Therefore, (39) evokes an existential proposition structure in the reader’s/listener’s mind: the clause states something about the presence/absence of the actant *teda* ‘s/he’ in the location *siin* ‘here’.

Just like in Latvian, a nominative subject is also possible in negative possessive clauses in Estonian – compare (28) with (40), (41) and (42).

- (40) *Hea iseloom ei ole tal kohe kindlasti.*
 good.NOM character.NOM NEG be s/he.ADE very definitely
 ‘He definitely doesn’t have a **good character**.’ (B; transitional possessive clause)

- (41) [---] *kui see ülesanne ei ole eraõiguslikel isikutel.*
 if this.NOM task.NOM NEG be.CNG private.ADE.PL
 person.ADE.PL
 ‘If private persons don’t have **this task** [---]’ (B)

These clauses have a possessive clause structure despite the fact that they have unmarked clause-like word order and a nominative subject. In (40) and (41) the grammatical and pragmatic subject seem to coincide: the subject is in the nominative

and in a clause-initial theme position. In (40) the semantic subject, however, is *tal* [s/he.ADE] because it is the most agent-like actant of the clause, it is active and definite in the discourse (it has recently been mentioned). On the clause level we still see possessive semantics. The clause states something about the possessor, the adessive argument rather than the subject referent. Although the word order is like in unmarked clauses (*subject – predicate – adverbial*), the information structure is different from them. In the latter the subject is the theme and presupposed in the discourse. In unmarked clauses the other core arguments tend to occur in the rheme. In prototypical possessive clauses the word order is *possessor (adverbial) – predicate – possessee (subject)*. They typically have the possessor argument as the theme that is presupposed in the discourse and the possessed entity in the rheme. It is important to note though that in (40) the subject doesn't occur in the theme neutrally but due to topicalisation (contrastive stress). The speaker seems to be saying: 'He might have many properties, but good character is not amongst them.' Therefore information-structurally it is still a possessive clause.

Example (42) depicts a situation with a possessive meaning and has the syntactic argument structure characteristic of the possessive clause type.

- (42) *Hea, et mul ei ole absoluutne mälu.*
 good.NOM that I.ADE NEG be.CNG absolute.NOM memory.NOM
 'It's good that I don't have **absolute memory**.' (B; possessive clause with
 a canonical possessive clause word order: *possessor – verb – subject*)

At the same time the grammatical subject of this negative clause is in the nominative as it is in unmarked, locative structures.

3.3. Quantitative (in)definiteness in Estonian

The case-marking of affirmative existential and to some extent possessive clause subjects depends on an elaborate set of inclusiveness-related rules in Estonian where partitive is triggered by non-inclusive quantity (cf. Luraghi, Kittilä 2014 about the cross-linguistic functions of the partitive). According to Christopher Lyons (1999: 2–13), **inclusiveness** is the quantitative aspect of definiteness. A referent (a delimited object or substance, mass) is quantitatively definite, i.e. inclusive if it is involved in the situation as a whole, in its totality, for example, an apple or the leafage of a tree. The noun *dogs* in *Beware of the dogs!* is also inclusive because it refers to all the dogs on the property. This also refers to the referents that are unique in the context, e.g. *the sun*, *the bride* (in a wedding). Estonian objects as well as existential (32) and possessive subjects are in the partitive if the quantity is non-inclusive.

This section focuses on affirmative existential clauses. Possessive clauses largely follow the same pattern. Helena Metslang (2014) suggests that inclusiveness-based case-marking of existential clause subjects can depend on lexical or contextual (situational) factors in Estonian.

If the subject referent is divisible (a mass noun or plural count noun), usually both nominative and partitive case-marking is possible, expressing inclusive and non-inclusive quantity respectively. Nemvalts (2000: 126) gives the following examples:

(43) *Puudelt langesid lehed.*
 tree.PL.ABL fall.PST.3PL leaf.N.PL
 ‘(All the) **leaves** fell down from the trees.’

(44) *Puudelt langes lehti.*
 tree.PL.ABL fall.PST.3SG leaf.PART.PL
 ‘(Some) **leaves** were falling down from the trees.’

Certain nouns – ‘existential nominatives’ and ‘existential partitives’ – only suit for either expressing inclusive or non-inclusive quantity and occur in the nominative or partitive in existential clauses respectively.¹ These include for example singular count nouns (nominative) (45) and a subset of partitive mass nouns (46).

(45) *Ja korruga torkas mulle pähe veider mõte.*
 and suddenly strike.PST.3SG I.ALL head.ILL strange.N.SG
 thought.N.SG
 ‘And suddenly I got this **strange idea**.’ Lit. ‘And suddenly struck into my head a strange idea.’ (ECC, existential nominative noun subject)

(46) *Siin on ruumi küll.*
 here be.3 space.PART indeed
 ‘There is **some space** here indeed.’ (existential partitive noun subject)

4. Overview of the corpus materials

4.1. Latvian data

Now we will proceed to the empirical part of our study. In order to discover the main factors triggering the use of the genitive of negation in Latvian, in 2016–2017, we manually extracted all the examples with the negated verb form *nebūt* ‘not to be’ from the morphologically annotated sub-corpus *miljons2.om* of the Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian. This subcorpus mostly (but not exclusively) includes edited texts.

Queries were made to look for sentences with existential and locative uses of *nebūt*. After filtering we had altogether 979 examples. Findings about certain rarer phenomena under observation in the following analysis must be taken with caution due to low numbers in the sample.

To make the study quantitatively feasible, we only focus on the group of existential clauses that do not have a locative adverbial and analyse the clauses with a locative adverbial as locative clauses. This roughly represents the key trends in the corpus. In future, a more detailed study is needed to further look at these existential clauses that contain a locative adverbial.

4.1.1. General characteristics of the data: subject case and clause type with the verb *nebūt*

The following preferred environments for the verb *nebūt* emerged from the analysis.

¹ This paper doesn’t look at the impact of adjectives and pronouns on existential subject case-marking (cf. Nemvalts 2000: 78–90) and verb government (Rätsep 1978: 104).

4.1.1.1. Subject case preference of the verb *nebūt*

In general, **genitive** subjects are used more widely than nominative subjects with the verb *nebūt*, at least in written texts. The analysed data contains 90% *nebūt* sentences with a genitive subject and 10% with a nominative subject (see Figure 1). This finding is in line with the other studies (Lagzdiņa 1997, Nītiņa, Grigorjevs 2013, Kalnača, Lokmane 2018) as well as with the authors' native speaker introspection.

In search for preferred environments of the nominative subject, previous studies (Lagzdiņa 1997, Partee, Borschev 2007, Leinonen 2016) have suggested that the preference for nominative subjects is higher in negative locative clauses than in negative existential clauses. Our data does not confirm this bias. There is no statistically significant difference between construction types in Latvian in this respect. Regardless of the subject's case, the verb *nebūt* is almost equally common in locative, possessive as well as existential clauses (the clauses without the respective adverbials), see Figure 1. When containing the verb *nebūt*, 91% of negative existential clauses and 87% of negative locative clauses prefer genitive subjects. This is also evidenced by the fact that 61% of the negative clauses with *nebūt* and a nominative subject do not contain a locative adverbial at all, see Figure 1.

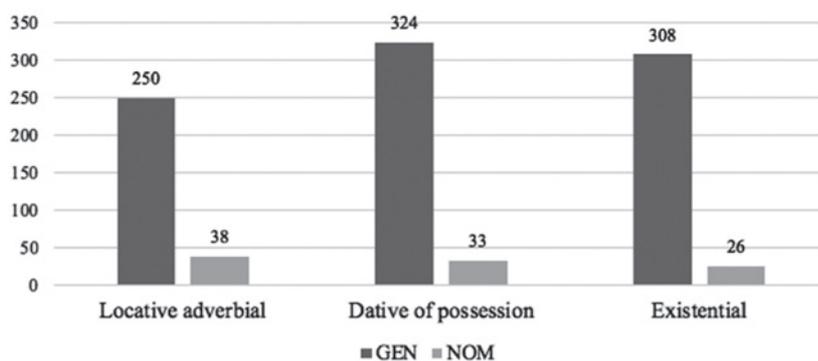


Figure 1. The verb *nebūt* distribution and subject case in the clauses with and without locative and dative of possession adverbials in the data (n = 979)

As for the combination of the verb *nebūt* and the **nominative** subject in the data, it is also productive in different clause types like its genitive counterpart: for example, both locative as well as existential clauses are common environments for the nominative subject.

4.1.1.2. Subject case preference and dative of possession

We found that 324 examples with genitive subjects (37% out of 882) and 33 examples with nominative subjects (34% out of 97) contained the dative of possession. These figures suggest that neither negative construction, i.e. neither the genitive nor the nominative subject construction, is a strong attractor of the dative of possession. This possible variation needs further investigation.

4.1.2. Subject case and properties of the subject phrase

For more detailed analysis, we tagged all the examples for the six features. In the following we will outline the distribution of these six key properties among negative genitive and nominative subject clauses: animacy, number, definiteness, phrase constitution and word order position. Then we will proceed to analysing the inter-connectedness of different features.

4.1.2.1. The subject's number (singular / plural)

The singular dominates among both genitive and nominative subjects (Figure 2).

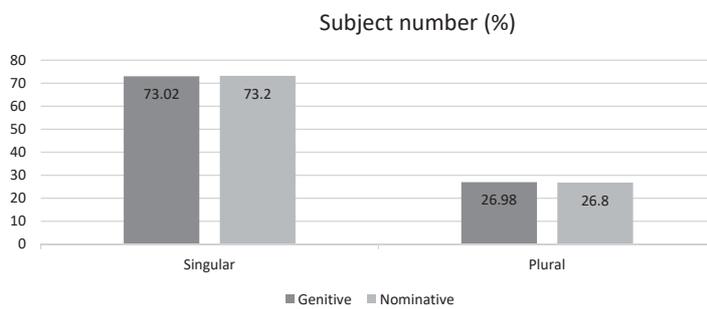


Figure 2. The subject's number and case usage (n = 979)

4.1.2.2. The subject's animacy / inanimacy

Both genitive and nominative subjects tend to be inanimate in the corpus (Figure 3).

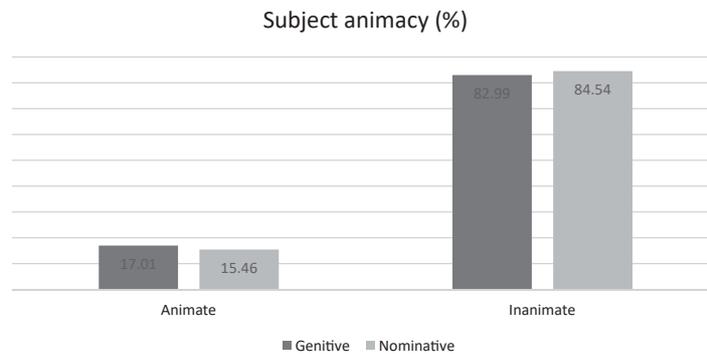


Figure 3. The subject's animacy and case usage (n = 979)

4.1.2.3. The subject's definiteness / indefiniteness

This is only expressed in Latvian by

- 1) a noun phrase containing a demonstrative, possessive, negative, definite or indefinite pronoun or
- 2) an adjective in the definite or indefinite form (for more detail on these rules see e.g. Nitiņa, Grigorjevs 2013: 389–391, 395–397).

Definiteness is not explicitly marked on bare nouns (except proper nouns, which are definite); rather, it emerges from the context. The genitive dominates among indefinite subjects and the nominative dominates among definite subjects (Figure 4). The data in Figure 4 should be taken with caution due to some ambiguity of the subject's definiteness value in a considerable proportion of the sentences. The analysis still suggests that there may be a relationship between the subject's level of definiteness and its case-marking.

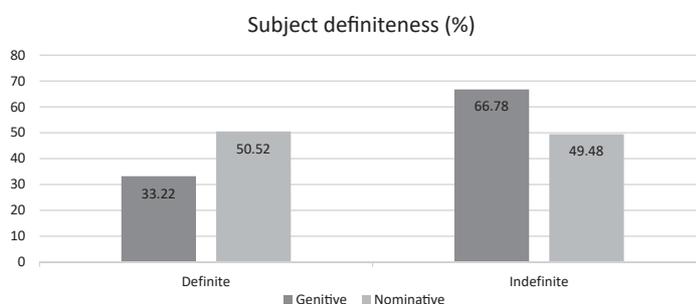


Figure 4. A rough division of subject case and definiteness values in Latvian existential, possessive, and locative clauses (n = 979)

4.1.2.4. The structure of the subject phrase (noun phrase / bare noun / demonstrative / personal pronoun / negative indefinite pronoun)

The subject phrase is more often in the nominative when it is longer, a noun phrase. When it is a bare noun it is more often in the genitive (Figure 5).

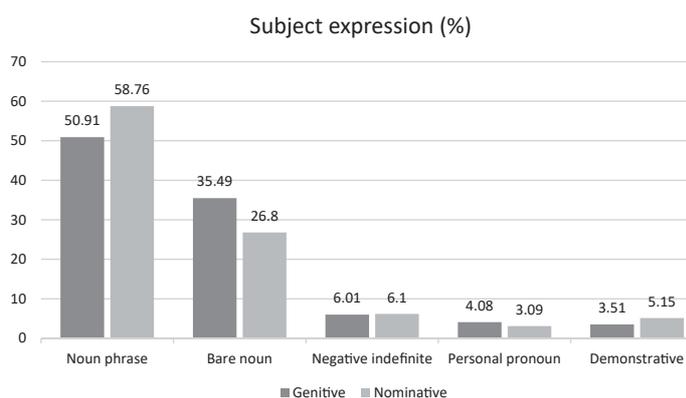


Figure 5. Subject case and phrase weight in Latvian negated existential, possessive, and locative clauses (n = 979)

4.1.2.5. Subject position (pre-verbal / post-verbal subject)

For the clauses containing a dative of possession we also tagged more detailed word-order parameters using three components (*subject – predicate – possessor*). In the general count, the word order position doesn't affect the subject's case (Figure 6).

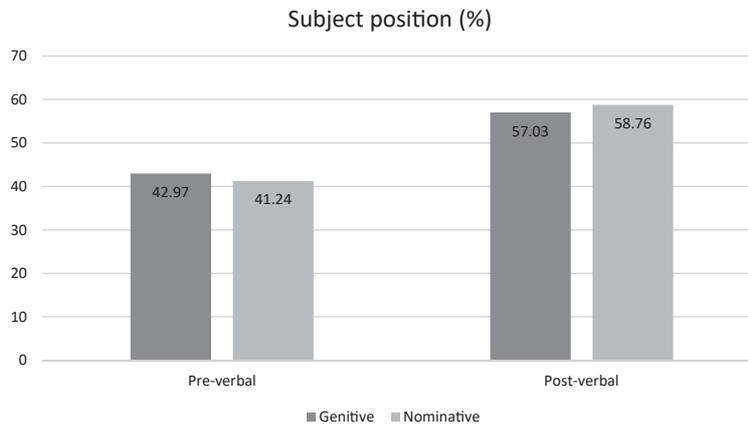


Figure 6. Subject case and position in negative existential, locative and possessive clauses in Latvian (n = 979)

4.1.2.6. Constituent order of the clauses containing a locative adverbial (*subject – predicate – adverbial, etc.*), case and definiteness

Concerning interconnection of the features, the differences between existential and locative clauses suggest that there may be a correlation between the subject's definiteness value and its word order position in *nebūt* clauses (see Leonetti 2008, Bentley 2015 on the same tendency in the Romance languages). Looking more closely, our data of 882 **genitive** subjects suggests the following. The clearest preference of word order position and referent definiteness value of genitive subjects is that post verbal subjects are indefinite (385, that is 77% of 503). Most indefinite subjects are also postverbal (385, that is 65% of 589). Definite subjects rather tend to be preverbal (175 or 60% of 293). At the same time, the preverbal position can almost equally well take both indefinite (204 or 54% of 379) and definite subjects (175 or 46% of 379) (Figure 7). Unfortunately, the data is not enough to show any significant differences among nominative *nebūt* subjects.

This means that in the negated clauses with genitive subjects there is a correlation between definiteness and word order.

Most subjects in the data are in the genitive but the proportion of genitive subjects is the lowest among post-verbal definite subjects. At the same time, although a low proportion of subjects in the negative existential and locative clauses are in the nominative, nominative marking is proportionately the highest among post-verbal definite subjects (see Table 2).

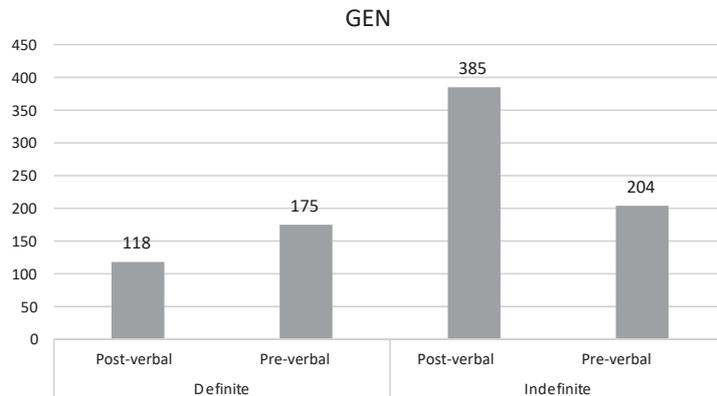


Figure 7. Word order position and definiteness of genitive subjects in Latvian *nebūt* clauses (n = 882)

Table 2. The proportion of genitive and nominative subjects among different word order positions and definiteness values in *nebūt* clauses in Latvian (n = 979)

Position, definiteness	GEN		NOM		GEN&NOM
	n	%	n	%	n
Pre-verbal definite	175	89%	21	11%	196
Pre-verbal indefinite	204	91%	19	9%	223
Post-verbal definite	118	80%	29	20%	147
Post-verbal indefinite	385	93%	28	7%	413
Total	882		97		979

4.1.3. Negative locative clauses and the interrelations of word order, case and definiteness

As mentioned above (Figure 1), the negative locative clauses (the clauses containing locative adverbials) in the Latvian data include 250 sentences with a genitive subject and 38 examples with a nominative subject. We found all of the six possible word order combinations in this sample. See Figure 8 for the frequency of each word order type.

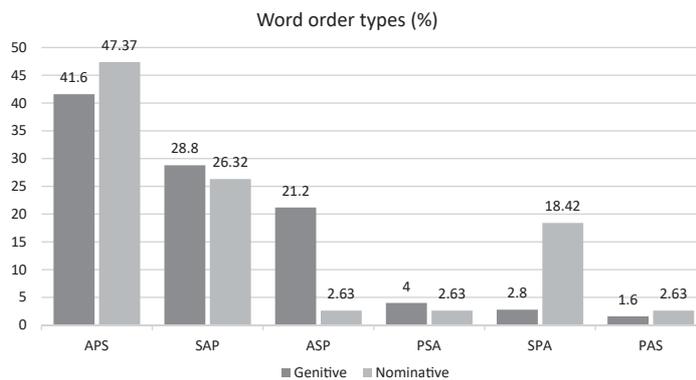


Figure 8. Subject case and word order in Latvian negative locative clauses containing locative adverbials (n = 288; S – subject, P – predicate, A – adverbial)

The most frequent word orders for negative locative clauses are APS and SAP. Genitive and nominative marking are distributed more or less equally in both of them. For example, see (17) for the first type and examples (47)–(48) for the second type.

- (47) *Izmaiņas sacīkstēs nebija.*
 change.NOM.PL.F competition.LOC.PL.F not_be.PST.3
 ‘There were no changes in the competition.’ (C, SAP order)
- (48) *Nekā vairāk šajā celtnē nebija.*
 nothing.GEN more this.LOC.F building.LOC.F not_be.PST.3
 ‘There was nothing else in this building.’ (C, SAP order)

In the SAP word order type the proportion of definite and indefinite subjects is equal, and this is true for both the nominatives and genitives. Most genitive **personal pronouns** (*viņa* [he GEN], *viņas* [she GEN], *manis* [I GEN], *tevis* [you GEN SG]) also appear clause-initially, mostly in this type (16 out of 21).

In addition to the two most frequent types of negative locative clause word order, SPA order is common with nominative subjects and ASP order is common with genitive subjects. We will first discuss the nominative-prone type, see for example (49).

- (49) *Morics nebija savā gultā.*
 Morics.NOM.M not_be.PST.3 oneself.LOC.F bed.LOC.F
 ‘Morics was not in his bed.’ (C, SPA order)

SPA is the canonical affirmative locative clause word order. In negative SPA clauses we almost exclusively find definite subjects. Although genitive subjects are much less common among negative locative clauses with this order, they are fully possible:

- (50) *Mammas naktī atkal nebija mājās.*
 mother.GEN.F night.LOC. again not_be.PST.3 home.LOC.PL.F
 ‘Mother was not at home again at night.’ (C, SPA order)

Sometimes this order is also used when personal pronouns occur as subjects (3 examples out of 21 in the corpus); in these cases, they receive genitive marking.

As said, negative locative clauses with ASP order have a high proportion of genitive subjects. More than one half of these (28 out of 53) are **negative indefinites** (e.g., *nekā* [nothing.GEN], *neviens* [no/nobody/no_one.M.SG.GEN], *neviens* [no/nobody/no.one.F.SG.GEN]) or noun phrases containing a negative indefinite (e.g., *nekāda* [no/none/not_any_kind.M.SG.GEN], *nekādas* [no/none/not_any_kind.F.SG.GEN], also *neviens*, *neviens*). Their pre-verbal position is not surprising because the pronoun (if not stressed) is never positioned at the end of the clause.

Thus, nearly all the **pronouns** in the subject position are pre-verbal but their position in relation to the locative adverbial is different for different types of pronouns. As discussed above, this may be related to definiteness. Further research is needed on the correlations between word order and definiteness in negative locative clauses.

4.1.4. Negative possessive clauses and the interrelations of word order, case and definiteness

Similarly to locative clauses, there is also great diversity in the word order of negative possessive clauses in Latvian, see Figure 9.

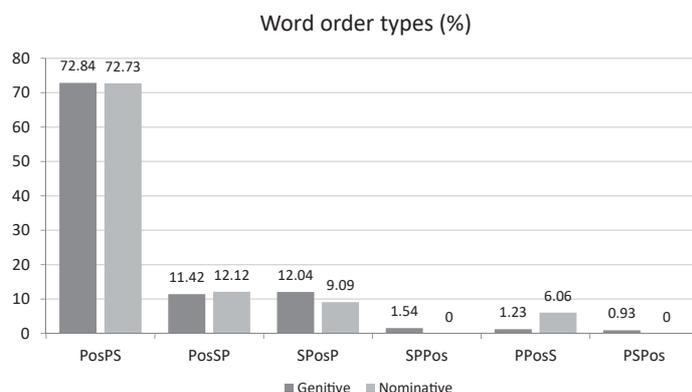


Figure 9. Subject case and word order in negative possessive clauses (n = 357, Pos – possessor argument, P – predicate, S – subject)

The most frequent word order type in negative possessive constructions is clearly PosPS (example 27). There is no significant difference between nominative and genitive subjects' distribution in the data. Genitive subjects occur in all six possible word order types and nominative subjects in only four.

4.2. The Estonian data

In the ECC there are 279 existential clauses. This includes 52 possessive clauses as a sub-type. Marginal cases where the clause is between existential and locative (Huumo, Lindström 2014) are included here. Table 3 presents the frequencies of locative and possessive adverbials in the clauses.

Table 3. Clauses with locative and possessive adverbials in ECC

Clause includes:	n	%
location adverbial (existential clause)	181	65%
no location adverbial (existential clause)	46	16%
possessor adverbial (possessive clause)	52	19%
Total	279	100%

All negative existential clauses in the corpus (total 20) belong to the first group – they include a location adverbial. The adverbial use variation rather occurs among affirmative clauses.

Estonian negative existential and possessive clauses almost always have a partitive subject, as in (30) above and (51).

- (51) *Tal ei ole haridust.*
 s/he.ADE NEG be.CNG education.PART
 ‘S/he doesn’t have any **education**.’

While the case alternation of the Latvian existential subject only shows complexity in negative clauses, Estonian, on the contrary, only has an elaborate set of case rules in affirmative existential clauses. Therefore, we will only present qualitative data on Estonian negative clauses here.

The case of the Estonian existential subject depends on inclusiveness, negation, on the noun lexeme, the predicate, or the construction. The following chart (Figure 10) illustrates the frequency with which each factor influenced the case of the existential subject in the sample of 125 clauses from the Balanced Corpus of Estonian.

In the following we will present some corpus data from Metslang (2014) to illustrate the general referential and information-structural properties of Estonian existential subjects. The pool includes about 20% negative clauses that were not specially selected but naturally occurred in the data. Possessive clauses have been included among existential clauses here.

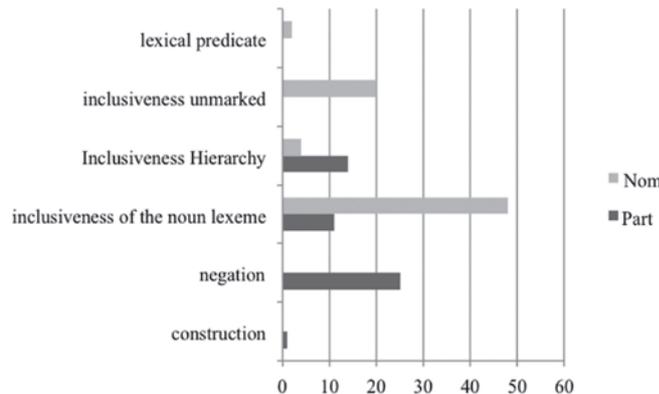


Figure 10. The case assignment motivations for the Estonian existential clause subject in the corpus (absolute numbers, n = 125, both affirmative and negative clauses) (Metslang 2014: 208)

As shown in Figure 10, just as in the case of the Latvian genitive, negation is the top partitive assignment factor among Estonian existential clause subjects. However, another important factor is inclusiveness.

Table 4 confirms that, like unmarked clauses (including locative clauses), existential clauses prefer neutral word order. In neutral cases the existential clause subject tends to be post-verbal, and the verb is preceded by a locative adverbial. Inversion with reversed word order takes place in 12% of existential clauses. As above, negative clauses only constitute about 20% of the data.

Most Estonian existential subjects are indefinite (see Figure 11). In the studied data, under 10% of existential subjects are non-referential. Instead, there is (generic) reference to a category and not to a specific entity representing the category (30) – similar to the Latvian example (20).

Table 4. Distribution of subject-verb order in intransitive, transitive, and existential clauses (% , both affirmative and negative clauses). The clauses with zero-anaphora are marked as having the neutral word order (Metslang 2014: 231)

Feature value	Intransitive	Transitive	Existential	Total (Abs. No)
Neutral direct order	84%	80%	5%	219
Inversion (topicalization)	15%	18%	0%	41
Inversion (subject postponing)	1%	1%	0%	4
Neutral inversion	0%	0%	83%	108
Direct order (topicalization)	0%	1%	8%	12
Direct order (focusing)	0%	0%	4%	5
Total (Abs. No)	130	130	130	

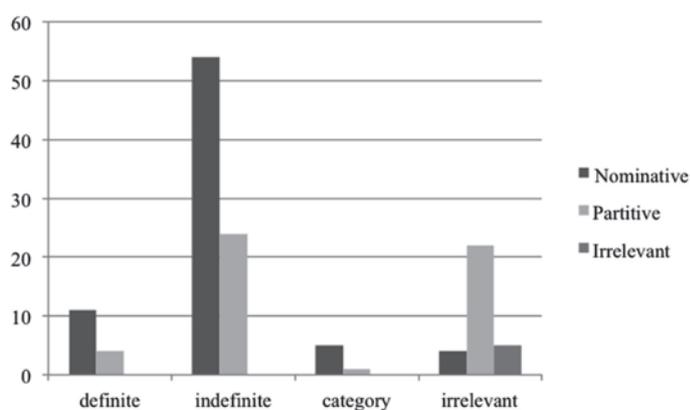


Figure 11. Case and definiteness / referentiality of Estonian existential subjects (absolute numbers, n = 130, both affirmative and negative clauses) (Metslang 2014: 238–243).

Figure 12 compares the phrase weight of existential subjects (e-NP) with that of transitive subjects (A) and objects (O) as well as of intransitive subjects (S).

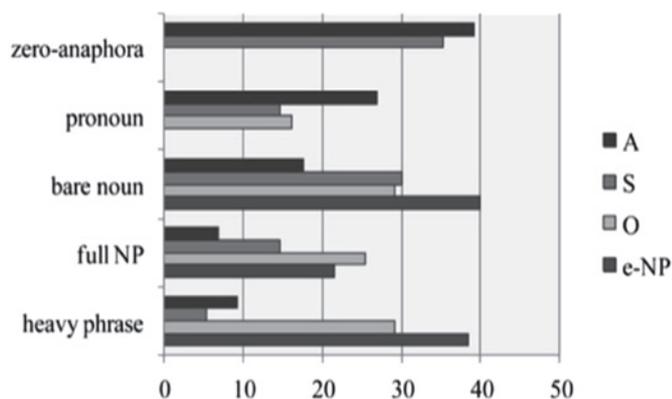


Figure 12. Distribution of phrase weight among argument types (% of all transitive and intransitive subjects (A and S respectively), objects (O) and existential subjects (e-NP), n = 520) (Metslang 2014: 225)

Most often nominative existential subjects are heavy phrases and bare nouns, while partitive existential subjects are bare nouns (Figure 13).

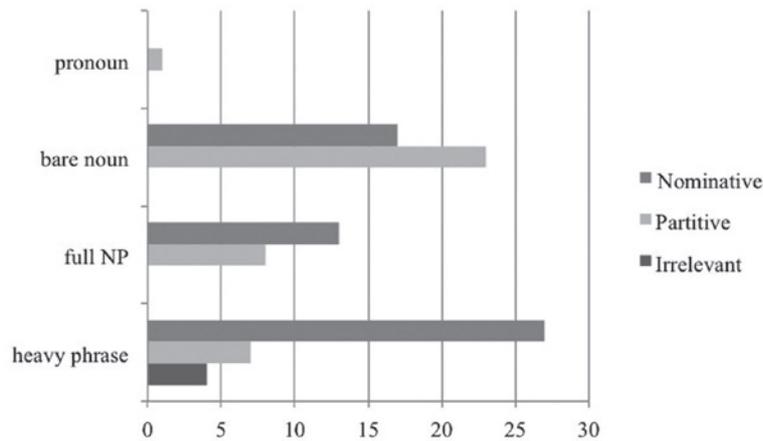


Figure 13. The case and distribution of phrase weight of Estonian existential subjects (% , n = 130, both affirmative and negative clauses) (Metslang 2014: 224–229)

5. Conclusion

While Latvian subject case alternation occurs in negative clauses, in Estonian it mainly occurs in affirmative clauses.

The Latvian part of the study confirmed that for both word order positions (pre-verbal and post-verbal) and definiteness values (definite and indefinite) most subjects are expectedly in the genitive in the corpus of *nebūt* clauses, which includes existential, possessive and locative clauses. In total, 90% of the subjects in the corpus are in the genitive.

1. The genitive dominates among indefinite subjects and the nominative dominates among definite subjects.
2. In the general count, the case doesn't affect the subject's position. Both genitive and nominative subjects are a bit more common in the post-verbal position.
3. Definite genitive subjects tend to be pre-verbal, whereas indefinite genitive subjects tend to be post-verbal. This means that in the negated clauses with genitive subjects there is a correlation between definiteness and word order. However, this is not true for nominative subjects.
4. Most subjects in the data are in the genitive, but the proportion of genitive subjects is the lowest among post-verbal definite subjects.

Our study confirmed that the genitive is more indefiniteness-prone than the nominative. Post-verbal indefinite subjects of the verb *nebūt* are especially often in the genitive in the corpus (93%). However, postverbal definite subjects of *nebūt* clauses have a significantly higher likelihood of being in the nominative (20%, as opposed to 7–11% of postverbal indefinite subjects and preverbal subjects). Genitive definite subjects tend to be pre-verbal.

Nominative and indefinite subjects favour postverbal position: *nebūt* clauses with APS order. The findings concerning the preverbal position of the subject are the following:

1. The canonical locative clause word order SPA prefers nominative and definite subjects.
2. APS and SAP orders commonly have both nominative and genitive subjects. They also have an almost equal amount of definite and indefinite subjects.
3. Both nominative and genitive pronominal subjects usually tend to be pre-verbal.
4. Nearly all genitive personal pronouns are in clauses with SAP order.
5. Over half of genitive subjects of ASP order *nebūt* clauses are negative indefinite pronouns.

Case alternation of the subject also correlates with phrase weight. Nominative subjects tend to be longer phrases than genitive ones. In future studies it would be worth distinguishing heavy noun phrases from shorter noun phrases. In Estonian, heavy noun phrase existential subjects strongly prefer the nominative (Metslang 2014: 225).

Comparing the results of analyses of the Latvian and Estonian corpus materials according to the three main features – the case form, definiteness / referentiality of the subject, and word order in negated clauses – we may conclude that:

1. In Latvian, there are no crucial semantic differences between negated clauses with a nominative subject and negated clauses with a genitive subject. In clauses with the verb *nebūt* ‘not to be’ there is a correlation between a) definiteness and the case form of the subject, b) definiteness and word order. Both correlations are just tendencies, not rules.

The three aspects (the case of the subject, definiteness / referentiality, and word order) are interrelated in Latvian. To determine which one is the strongest, other lexical and contextual factors need to be analysed as well in future studies.

2. In Estonian, negative existential and possessive clause subjects are mostly in the partitive. The nominative is permitted when a contrastive opposition occurs in the negative clause. In the affirmative, the case of the existential and possessive subject depends on inclusiveness, which can, in turn, depend on the interpretation of the situation or be grammatically tied to the subject noun, the lexical predicate, or the construction. Definiteness, referentiality, and phrase weight do not directly affect Estonian subject case-marking, but there are statistical tendencies in how these values distribute on differently case-marked subjects.
3. Although locative and existential clauses can be clearly separate clause types with their own information structure, semantics, word order and morphosyntax, there is no strict boundary between existential, locative, and possessive clauses in Latvian and Estonian. Transitional uses share characteristic features of different canonical cases of clause types.

In Estonian, most existential clauses have a locative adverbial. A closer discourse-level contrastive analysis is needed to find out what clause type (e.g. locative clause) is used in Latvian where Estonian uses existential constructions and to compare transitional areas between locative and existential clauses in both languages.

Abbreviations

2, 3	2nd, 3rd person	FUT	future
A	adverbial; subject in transitive clause	GEN	genitive
abe	abessive	IMP	imperative
ABL	ablative	INE	inessive
ACC	accusative	LOC	locative
ADE	adessive	lv	Latvian
AUX	auxiliary	M	masculine
CL	clitic	N	neuter
CNG	connegative	NEG	negation
COP	copula	NOM	nominative
DAT	dative	O	object
DIM	diminutive	P	predicate
e-NP	existential subject	PART	partitive
ECC	Estonian Existential Clause corpus	PL	plural
ELA	elative	Pos	possessor
et	Estonian	PST	past
F	feminine	PTCP	participle
		S	subject
		SG	singular

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SUBJEKTI KÄÄNDEVAHELDUS LÄTI JA EESTI KEELE EKSISSIAALLAUSETES

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Nii eesti kui ka läti keeles esineb subjekti käändevaheldust. Läti keeles saab subjekt olla lisaks nominatiivile ka genitiivis, eesti keeles lisaks nominatiivile ka partitiivis. Artiklis võrreldakse subjekti käändevaheldust mõlema keele kirjaliku variandi eksistentiaallauses, lisaks vaadeldakse ka eksistentiaallausega seostuvaid lausetüüpe: lokatiiv- ja possessiivlauset.

Läti keele subjekti käändevaheldus leiab aset eitavates lausetes verbiga *nebut* 'mitte olema', mida nimetame tinglikult eksistentiaal-, possessiiv- ja lokatiivlauseteks. Kõigis lausetüüpides domineerib genitiivsubjekt mõjukalt nominatiivsubjekti üle. Eesti keele subjektikäände varieerumine ilmneb kõige produktiivsemalt eksistentiaal- ja possessiivlausestes, seejuures on olulisemateks käändevaliku mõjuriteks lause polaarsus ja subjekti referendi kvantitatiivne määratletus.

Esitame tänapäeva läti keele korpusematerjalil põhinevaid uuringutulemusi ning kõrvutame neid seniste uuringutega läti ja eesti keele kohta. Erinevalt varasematest seisukohtadest ilmneb, et lausetüübil peaaegu puudub mõju läti keele subjektikäände. Uurime seetõttu peamisi subjekti kääned mõjutavate muutujate klastreid, keskendudes nende erinevatele realiseerumisvõimalustele. Peamised muutujad on subjekti referendi definiitsus, subjekti sõnaliik, subjektifraasi raskus ning subjekti paiknemine predikaadi ja määruse suhtes. Andmetest ei ilmne tugevaid reegleid, vaid ainult eelistuste tendentsid. Kõigis vaadeldavates lausestruktuuritüüpides on sagedasem genitiivsubjekt, kuid ülekaalukuse määr varieerub. Korpusematerjali suurim rühm subjekte on verbijärgsed indefiniitsed genitiivsubjektid.

Nominatiivi kasutus on kõige sagedasem verbijärgsete definiitsete subjektide puhul, ületades kahekordselt nominatiivsubjektide osakaalu kogu uuritud korpusematerjalis. Teatud puhkudel on ka lausetüüp subjektikäände osaliseks mõjutajaks. Näiteks on eitavas lokatiivlausest, mille sõnajärg meenutab jaatavat lokatiivlausest, definiitne subjekt just nominatiivis.

Artikkel esitab läti keele uuringutulemuste kõrvale tänapäeva eesti keele korpusematerjalil põhinevaid kvalitatiivseid ja arvulisi andmeid eesti keele võrreldavate subjektikäände tegurite ja tingimuste kohta.

Keywords: nominatiiv, genitiiv, partitiiv, eitus, läti keel, eesti keel

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