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# ‘Cause’ in question: about three ways of starving to death in Lithuanian

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The phrases *mirti bad-u* (‘to die hunger-INS.SG’), *mirti iš bad-o* (‘to die iš hunger-GEN.SG’), *mirti nuo bad-o* (‘to die nuo hunger-GEN.SG’) are generally considered to be synonymous ways to express a cause of death. Still, if the instrumental case, the preposition *iš* and the preposition *nuo* may be interchangeable without a difference of interpretation in this expression out of context, these three syntactic constructions cannot be considered equivalent: precise analysis of the contexts where these constructions occur shows that each construction corresponds to a specific semantic value, which distinguishes it from the other two. In sum, these two syntactic constructions provide three different representations of the event ‘die of hunger’, hence, in some contexts, the substitution of one construction for another is not possible. The analysis of this micro phenomenon will enable us to extend our study to other expressions involving a cause, to propose definitions of the semantics of the instrumental case and of the prepositions *iš* and *nuo* and finally to observe that ‘cause’ is a complex label covering very different situations which arise directly from the forms constructing them.

**Keywords:** semantics, syntax, morphology, case, preposition, synonymy, cause, instrumental, relator

## 0. Introduction

In Lithuanian, a cause may be introduced by—at least—three different syntactic constructions: the preposition *iš*, the preposition *nuo* and the instrumental case. In some instances, these three constructions are equally possible and they are frequently considered an example of syntactic synonymy (see Valiulytė 1998, 360, Šukys 1998, 241). The expression in (1) is often quoted to illustrate this so-called synonymy:

- (1) *mir-ti bad-u,* / *iš bad-o,*  
die-INF hunger-INS.SG / *iš* hunger-GEN.SG  
/ *nuo bad-o*  
/ *nuo* hunger-GEN.SG  
‘to die of hunger’

Detailed analysis of the contexts where these three constructions appear shows that they are not equivalent but correspond to three rather different interpretations of what a ‘cause’ may be. Our objective is to account for the conditions in which these three markers, which are not causal *a priori* and which have clearly distinct uses otherwise, may converge and find themselves in a synonymy relationship.

We will follow French linguist Antoine Culioli, who defines language as a meaningful representational activity. The specific feature of this theory is that meaning is not considered a primitive, which each language would encode in its own way. Meaning is created in the utterance, in the succession of operations, of which the syntactic constructions and forms observable in each language are the tracks. The linguist’s task is, by a process of abstraction, to reconstruct these operations from a meticulous analysis of the tracks we find in languages.

We shall begin by examining the function of a case and of a preposition in order to be able to conceive the semantics of our three markers. We will then come to the analysis of their conditions of use in the expressions meaning ‘to die of hunger’, before extending our study to other expressions of cause.

## 1. Cases and Prepositions are relators

The treatments of cases and prepositions in the literature present striking similarities. At least two main lines of investigation may be identified:

- the argument or adjunct status of the phrase (see for instance Dowty 2003, Franckel & Paillard 2007, Partee & Borschev 2003)
- the distinction between grammatical and semantic values of the marker (see for instance the distinction between grammatical and concrete or semantic cases drawn by Jespersen 1924, 185, Lyons 1968, 295, Blake 1994, 32, Bergsland 1997, and the notion of ‘empty’, ‘weak’, ‘colorless’ or ‘abstract’ prepositions in Vendryes 1921, Sécheyay 1950, Spang-Hanssen 1963, Cadiot 1997)

Zwicky (1992, 370) summarizes the similarities in the following formula: “Anything you can do with cases you can also do with adpositions and vice versa”. Generally speaking, cases, like prepositions, indicate dependence on a constituent which governs them. We can quote as an illustration Blake (1994, 1) who considers that Case is ‘a

system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads’ and Denis & Sancier Chateau (1994) who define a prepositional phrase as a group which maintains ‘avec la phrase ou avec un de ses constituants un rapport de dépendance’. Hagège (1997, 19) puts in the same category of *relator* prepositions, postpositions, case endings—or a combination of two of these means—as well as tones in certain languages: he defines a relator as ‘marque de dépendance d’un complément, circonstanciel ou actanciel par rapport à un prédicat, le plus souvent verbal’.

The proximity between cases, adpositions and terms considered to have a basic connecting function in general can also be highlighted by morphology. In some languages, it has been shown that certain case endings originate from relator nouns. In Sinhalese, for instance, the dative *-t* and locative *-ge* case inflection suffixes derive from certain forms of the Sanskrit nouns *artha* ‘aim, wealth’ and *grha* ‘house, place, town’ respectively (Starosta 1976, 88). In Lithuanian, the allative case, which expresses the direction towards something, was formed by the incorporation of a postposition (*-pi(e)* ‘near’) to a nominal base in the genitive case (Kazlauskas 1968, 165):

- (2) *vakar-op*                    (= *vakar-o* + *-p*)  
       evening-ALL.SG    (evening-GEN.SG + POST)  
       ‘towards the evening’

Still, as Colombat (1981, 19) rightly underlines, there is certainly a fundamental difference between cases and prepositions: the first are only the non-independent manifestation of a relation between two terms, whereas the latter are an independent manifestation of this relation:

La préposition étant un signifiant autonome elle n’est pas seulement marque de ce rapport, elle est aussi terme, ce qui lui donne sur le cas une supériorité indiscutable. Au contraire, le cas reste marque, avec tout ce que cela implique de contingent.

Despite this difference in nature, I assume we have here two different means to do the same thing: establish a relation of dependency between two terms, a relation which we translate in terms of abstract LOCATION (in French ‘repérage’). The operator of location, which puts terms in relation with each other, is a central concept of A. Culioli’s

theory, which is based on the hypothesis that any enunciative operation boils down to such an operation: “Tout terme (au sens le plus large: séquence, phrase, unité lexicale, etc.) se trouve pris dans une relation à un autre terme, préalablement donné, et qui a par conséquent dans cette relation toujours asymétrique le statut de **repère**” (Franckel & Paillard 1998, 55). We hypothesize that cases and prepositions are particular operators of location carrying a specific semantics, which we call *relators* ( $\mathcal{R}$ ).

We will consider that in each instance, preposition and case ending establish an asymmetric relation between two terms  $x$  and  $y$ , where  $y$  is the source of determinations of  $x$ . One can note this relation as  $xry$ , where  $y$  corresponds to the noun introduced by the preposition or to the noun inflected with the instrumental case. The identification of  $x$  is more complex;  $x$  may correspond to a term of the context or to a component of the semantic representation of the verb, for instance.

Based on this general hypothesis, we can propose the following hypotheses on the semantics of each of the three markers. These abstract characterizations result from the detailed analysis of the three markers in the variety of their respective uses, an analysis which is necessary to identify the principle organizing their variation. They are based on the thesis that any preposition, like any case (in a particular language), has a semantic identity which cannot be defined by some basic meaning, but by the specific role it plays in the interrelations between the terms of the context in which it appears; it is these interrelations that constitute the meaning of the utterance<sup>1</sup>.

#### Semantics of the instrumental case<sup>2</sup>:

1. the instrumental case is a relator: it posits a relation of location between terms  $x$  and  $y$ , where  $y$  is the source of determinations for  $x$ ;
  2.  $y$  defines  $x$  providing it with qualitative properties.
- $y$  is the term inflected with the instrumental case (here *badas*, hunger). In the example here,  $x$  corresponds to the process  $p$

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<sup>1</sup> For a justification of this position, see de Penaros (2013b) in the present volume, pp. 135–136.

<sup>2</sup> My sincere thanks to Denis Paillard, who helped me clarify the formulation of these hypotheses.

(here *mirti*, to die); indeed, as we shall see later, the noun in the instrumental case qualifies the process like an adverb, defining a type of p (here a type of death).

One can represent this relation as follows: SUBJ [*mirti*]<sub>x</sub> [*bad*]<sub>y</sub> -u<sub>R</sub>

Semantics of the preposition *nuo*:

1. *nuo* is a relator: it posits a relation of location between terms x and y, where y is the source of determinations for x;
2. *nuo* posits that y is an autonomous term which determines x in giving its origin.

y is the term introduced by the preposition (here *badas*, hunger). In the present instance, x corresponds to the event (here somebody dying): *nuo* y means that x has y as its origin.

One can represent this relation as follows: [SUBJ *mirti*]<sub>x</sub> *nuo*<sub>R</sub> [*bado*]<sub>y</sub>

Semantics of the preposition *iš*:

1. *iš* is a relator: it posits a relation of location between terms x and y, where y is the source of determinations for x;
2. *iš* posits that y has a double status: on the one hand, it is considered as fully y, y as such, (noted I); on the other hand, it is considered from an external point of view (noted E).
3. *iš* posits that x, which is initially located by I of y (y as such), is located by E of y (y considered from an external point of view).

y is the term introduced by the preposition (here *badas*, hunger). In this particular instance, x is the subject of the predicate p (here *mirti*, to die), more precisely, it is the subject insofar as it is involved in the process p (*mirti*). *Iš* posits that x is initially located by 'hunger as such' (I of y), which signifies that the individual to which the term corresponding to x (the subject) refers, is affected by the sensation of hunger. E of y, in other words, y considered from an 'external' point of view, means here that y is considered solely through the process p which involves x. The notation E signifies that y is not taken into account as such but through its relation to the process. As a corollary, this process is considered

from the perspective of the relation between  $x$  and  $y$ , and, as such,  $p$  is an ‘external’ manifestation of  $y$ .

One can represent this relation as follows: [SUBJ]<sub>x</sub> *mirti iš*<sub>r</sub> [*bado*]<sub>y</sub>

Given these three definitions, we have, with the terms *mirti* (to die) and *badas* (hunger), three different representations of a ‘death by hunger’:

*mirti badu*

The instrumental case constructs the noun *badas* as a term which **defines the process of dying with qualitative properties**: the noun *badas* provides defining properties to the death; the phrase [*mirti badu*] is interpreted as a particular type of death (in that it is a death by hunger/starvation, which distinguishes it from a death from cold, or from a heart attack for instance).

*mirti nuo bado*

The preposition *nuo* constructs the noun *badas* as an **autonomous** term, which retrospectively determines the process, **by giving its origin**. The preposition *nuo* introduces a cause as defined in the dictionary ‘events that provide the generative force that is the origin of something’.

*mirti iš bado*

The preposition *iš* constructs the death as being a **manifestation of hunger**. *Iš* provides the term *badas* with a double status: on the one hand, it refers to the notion ‘hunger’ as such; on the other hand, it is solely taken into account as determining the involvement of  $x$  in the process. The hunger manifests itself through death, in other words, death, through the relation established by *iš*, is considered as a manifestation, an ‘exteriorization’ of hunger.

In some contexts, these three representations of death by hunger are equivalent, in that the difference of meaning implied (type of death/ death caused by an independent event / death as a manifestation of hunger) is not relevant: the three constructions are then interchangeable (see (3)).

- (3) *Tai viena skurdžiausių pasaulio valstybių. Nors trūksta būtiniausių prekių ir maisto, dešimtys tūkstančių piliečių mirė nuo bado/ badu/iš bado, valdžia didžiules lėšas skiria armijos išlaikymui, masinio naikinimo ginklų kūrimui ir gamybai.*

‘This is one of the poorest states in the world. Although food

and goods for basic needs are lacking, and **tens of thousands of people have died of hunger**, the State devotes enormous sums to the maintenance of the army, to the creation and production of weapons of mass destruction.’

But such instances are rare. The semantics of *nuo*, which constructs hunger as an autonomous term, is quite different from the semantics of the preposition *iš* and of the instrumental case, and the result is that *nuo* is rarely substitutable for these two constructions in context (and vice versa). The semantics of the instrumental case and of the preposition *iš* are much closer to each other for this causal relation, and their differences of meaning are quite difficult to tackle in this purely notional<sup>3</sup> issue. Still, we maintain that these semantic differences exist in the system of the language even if they are not relevant in certain contexts (implying then an apparent synonymy) and that the definitions of these markers permit us to highlight the dividing line between *mirti badu* and *mirti iš bado*<sup>4</sup>, and to account for the differences of distribution of the two constructions outside of this specific expression.

We will examine these three expressions successively in order to clarify their specificities, and will each time widen our study to other expressions of cause. This study is based on a corpus of around 3000 occurrences from the database *Kompiuterinès Lingvistikos Centras* ([donelaitis.vdu.lt](http://donelaitis.vdu.lt)) which was submitted to native speakers.

## 2. Three different representations of a ‘cause’

### 2.1. Instrumental case: definition of the process by qualitative properties

#### 2.1.1. Death as an abstraction

Examining numerous contexts, we observe that the instrumental predominates in those where the ‘death by hunger’ is taken into account abstractly, as a type of death.

<sup>3</sup> We refer here to the classical distinction between the three possible conceptual domains : spatial, temporal and what is neither spatial nor temporal, i. e. notional.

<sup>4</sup> It is to be noted that we encountered the same practical difficulty in this study as in de Penaros 2013b (this volume, see point 2. ‘Methodology’, pp. 141–142) and that the same observation concerning the preponderance of the preposition *iš* over the instrumental case could be made.



- (4) *Tie, kurie nebepakelia išdavystės ir sugalvoja žudytis,*  
*tegu pabando mir-ti bad-u / ?iš bad-o*  
 let try.PRS.3 die-INF hunger-INS.SG / ??iš hunger-GEN.SG  
*/ ?nuo bad-o.*  
*/ ?nuo hunger-GEN.SG*  
*Toks bandymas per porą savaičių juos dažniausiai sugrąžina į gyvenimą.*  
 ‘Those who can no longer bear betrayal and are thinking of suicide **just have to try and die of hunger**. Such an attempt will bring them back to life within two weeks.’

*Mirti badu* is the best expression to use in (4), where the ‘death by hunger’ is considered as a type of death to be tested. Likewise, this conception of a ‘type of death’ with the instrumental explains why the informants<sup>5</sup> spontaneously use *mirti badu* when given context (5).

- (5) – If you could choose, would you rather **die of hunger** or get drowned?  
 – I’d rather **die of hunger**.  
 – *Jei tu galėtum pasirinkti, tu norėtum mirti badu ar nusiskandinti ?*  
 – *Aš geriau mirčiau badu.*

### 2.1.2. Terms possible in position $\gamma$

The semantics of the instrumental which provides the process with qualitative properties to define its nature explains which nouns may be employed in position  $\gamma$ <sup>6</sup>.

First of all, with the verb *mirti*, only nouns referring to usual causes of death are possible in the instrumental.

- (6) *mirti badu*<sub>INS.SG</sub>, *plaučių vėžiu*<sub>INS.SG</sub>, *gripu*<sub>INS.SG</sub> / *\*meile*<sub>INS.SG</sub>  
*\*džiaugmu*<sub>INS.SG</sub> *\*skausmu*<sub>INS.SG</sub>

<sup>5</sup> They generally specify afterwards that the preposition *iš* is also possible in such an instance.

<sup>6</sup> The present article focuses on the question of ‘cause’. However, one can note that the expression of a ‘cause’ is not the only way to define a type of death, but it is still the instrumental which is used: *mirti natural-ia / lėt-a / kankinam-a / kankin-io mirt-imi* (‘to die natural-INS.SG / slow-INS.SG / painful-INS.SG / martyr-GEN.SG death-INS.SG, ‘to die a natural, slow, painful death, to die a martyr’s death’).

‘to die of hunger, of lung cancer, of the flu, \*of love, \*of joy, \*of pain’

Secondly, the term in the instrumental ( $\gamma$ ) must be typical enough regarding death in order to be able to define its nature; as such it must enter a paradigm made up of the different possible causes of the same order<sup>7</sup>. With *mirti*, while all the nouns of diseases are possible in the instrumental case, the generic term *liga* (disease) is impossible (and the preposition *nuo* is employed).

(7) *mirti \*liga*<sub>INS.SG</sub> /*\*iš ligos* / *nuo ligos*  
‘to die of disease’

Thirdly, the names of internal sensations are not possible in position  $\gamma$ :

(8) *mirti \*alkiu*<sub>INS.SG</sub>, *\*troškuliu*<sub>INS.SG</sub>, *\*nuovargiu*<sub>INS.SG</sub>  
‘to die of \*hunger, of \*thirst, of \*fatigue’

It is interesting to note here that there are two nouns in Lithuanian corresponding to the single word ‘hunger’: *badas* and *alkis*.

- *badas* refers to hunger as ‘lack’: this term is defined as ‘*neturėjimas ko valgyti*’ (non-possession of something to eat, absence of food). In colloquial Lithuanian, this term may also be employed to refer to all sorts of lacks: ‘*popieriaus badas*’ (lack of paper)
- *alkis* refers to hunger as ‘sensation’: ‘*norėjimas valgyti, išalkimas, badas*’ (will to eat, starvation, hunger 1)

Only the first one (*badas*: hunger, famine, lack) is possible in the instrumental case with *mirti*, because internal sensations are not considered as typical causes of death.

<sup>7</sup> This property seems common to all the uses of the instrumental, whether it introduces an adjunct or an attribute; it is employed in instances when the N introduced belongs to a closed paradigm: choice of a route between several routes possible in the spatial value (*važiuoti siauromis gatvėmis* ‘to pass through narrow streets’), selection of terms belonging to closed lists (*pirmadieniais* ‘on Mondays’) or pinpointed by a demonstrative in the temporal value (*tuometu* ‘at that time’), choice of an instrument—or of a means—among others in the manner value (*važiuoti traukiniu* ‘to go by train’, *šauti šautuvu* ‘to shoot a gun’), unstable, temporary state (i. e., opposed to another one) in attribute use, etc.

### 2.1.3. Different constraints with other processes

These constraints on the use of names of emotions, feelings and sensations are not absolute: there are some processes whose typical causes are precisely emotions, feelings and sensations, and the instrumental is then possible. This is for instance true of the verb *švytėti*, which means ‘to shine, glow, radiate’ (see (9)).

- (9) *švytė-ti* *laim-e*, *meil-e*, *džiaugsm-u*,  
 shine-INF happiness-INS.SG love-INS.SG joy-INS.SG  
*ramyb-e*, *vilt-imi*  
 serenity-INS.SG hope-INS.SG  
 ‘to shine with happiness, love, joy, serenity, hope’

With this verb, the cause may be introduced either by the instrumental or by the preposition *iš*. These expressions are *clichés*, where the list of the words possible in the instrumental or in the prepositional phrase with *iš* very much depends on the properties of the predicate, or even the nature of the subject. The area of *clichés* with names of emotion/feeling/sensation seems to be occupied as well—but differently—by the instrumental, as by the preposition *iš*. This area is however not covered by the preposition *nuo*. We will come back to this point in section 2.2.3.

### 2.1.4. Nouns referring to external<sup>8</sup> phenomena possible

If we consider not only the nouns of emotion/feeling/sensation, the difference between the instrumental and the preposition *iš* becomes more explicit. Indeed, the typical causes of shining or glowing are not restricted to internal feelings, and one can have numerous terms referring to external phenomena in the instrumental case. In such a

<sup>8</sup> ‘External phenomena’ are those that refer to the *external* appearance or aspect of the element to which the subject refers, and as such stand in contrast with the emotions/feelings/sensations mentioned above. More generally, we will use the term ‘external cause’ to refer to a cause that is not an internal cause: it may correspond to an emotion/sensation/feeling/psychological trait of an individual other than the one referred to by the subject of the predicate, to an element in the appearance of the subject (or *a fortiori* of someone else), to elements of nature, to diseases, etc.; in sum, to anything that is not an emotion/sensation/feeling/psychological trait of the subject of the predicate.

situation, the preposition *iš* cannot be employed, the instrumental competes with the preposition *nuo*, but we will come back to this point in section 2.3.3.

- (10) *švytė-ti auks-u, skaisč-iu raudon-iu, vis-u*  
 shine-INF gold-INS.SG pure-INS.SG red-INS.SG all-INS.SG  
*gražum-u, akinam-a šypsen-a*  
 beauty-INS.SG blinding-INS.SG smile-INS.SG  
 ‘to shine like gold, a pure red, with all one’s beauty, with a blinding smile’

## 2.2. Preposition *iš*: the process as a manifestation of $\gamma$

### 2.2.1. Contexts of expression of a feeling

If *iš bado* and *badu* are most of the time substitutes for one another in contexts of effective death, the instrumental case is more difficult to use when ‘to die of hunger’ only expresses undernourishment or a simple feeling. Thus the preposition *iš* is preferably employed in contexts like (11), which corresponds to the usual expression you utter when you are very hungry:

- (11) *Miršt-u iš bad-o! /?bad-u!*  
 die.PRS-1SG *iš* hunger-GEN.SG */?hunger-INS.SG*  
 (*/\*nuo bad-o!*)  
 (*/\*nuo* hunger-GEN.SG)  
 ‘I’m dying of hunger [starving]!’

### 2.2.2. Predictions of the semantic definition of *iš*

The semantics of *iš* permits us to account for the constraints on using this preposition in causal relations in general. More precisely, it lets us account for the properties of the terms used in position  $\gamma$ : *iš* exclusively combines with nouns referring to emotions, sensations, psychological traits of the subject. To put it another way, *iš* combines exclusively with names of abstract notions which can only be materialized through the behavior of the individual who feels them. These two properties of  $\gamma$ , i. e. ‘ABSTRACT / INTERNAL’, are captured by the semantic definition of *iš*:

(i) The formulation “*iš* posits that  $\gamma$  has a double status:  $\gamma$  as the notion as such (I)” captures the fact that the term in position  $\gamma$  exclusively refers to **abstract notions**. For this reason, terms particularizing  $\gamma$  (noun adjuncts, possessives, etc.) are excluded from the prepositional phrase (see (12)).

- (12) *iš tinginystės / \*iš savo tinginystės*  
*iš laziness / \*iš REFL.POSS laziness*  
 ‘because of laziness, \*because of his/her laziness’

More generally, the prepositional phrase cannot easily be extended with modifiers, because it is important that  $\gamma$  referred to the abstract notion as such. It can chiefly be completed by adjectives expressing a—most often—high degree (see (13))<sup>9</sup>.

- (13) *iš didelio džiaugsmo, iš neišpasakyto skausmo*  
*iš big joy iš unspeakable pain*  
 ‘for great joy, with unspeakable pain’

(ii) The formulation “ $x$  is initially located by I of  $\gamma$  ( $\gamma$  as such)” shows the necessary cohesion between  $x$  (the subject) and  $\gamma$  (the feeling, emotion or psychological trait);  $\gamma$  is necessarily a phenomenon **internal** to the subject of the predicate, ( $x$ ).

This constraint distinguishes *iš* from the other two constructions which may introduce external causes, i. e., causes which may correspond to individuals or elements distinct or dissociable from the subject (see (14) & (15)).

- (14) *Jonas apsvaigęs nuo/\*iš jį*  
 Jonas intoxicated *nuo/\*iš* 3.ACC.SG  
*užplūd-us-io džiaugsm-o.*  
 invade-gerp-GEN.SG joy-GEN.SG  
 ‘Jonas is wild with the joy that has invaded him<sup>10</sup>.’
- (15) *Pieva geltonuoja*  
*purien-omis / \*iš purien-ų /nuo purien-ų*  
 buttercup-INS.PL / \*iš buttercup-GEN.PL /nuo buttercup-GEN.PL

<sup>9</sup> See Valiulytė (1998, 341) for this point.

<sup>10</sup> The instrumental case is also impossible here: with the instrumental, causes must be typical, so when drunkenness is concerned, causes have to deal with alcohol.

‘The field is bright yellow with buttercups. (lit. the field yellows with buttercups)

On the other hand, this property of the preposition *iš* explains why, unlike the instrumental case, it is perfectly possible with the verb *mirti* (to die) and the term *alkis* (hunger sensation) in position  $\gamma$ :

- (16) *mirti iš alkio*  
 to die *iš* hunger  
 ‘to die of hunger’

One then understands why the preposition *iš* cannot introduce nouns of diseases as causes of the predicate *mirti* (to die) (see (6’)): a disease is an external element which is ‘caught’ by the patient, it has an autonomy as it can be contagious, it can spread in the body in its own way and it has a series of symptoms which make it concrete.

- (6’) *mirti plauč-ių vėž-iu, grip-u /*  
 die lung-GEN.PL cancer-INS.SG flu-INS.SG  
 \**iš plauč-ių vėž-io iš grip-o*  
 \**iš lung-GEN.PL cancer-GEN.SG iš flu-GEN.SG*  
 ‘to die of lung cancer, of the flu’

With *iš*, the phenomena expressed by the verb: the death, shaking, crying of the subject ( $x$ ) are a manifestation, an ‘exteriorization’ of the hunger, fear or pain ( $\gamma$ ) that this subject is feeling:

- (17) *mirti iš bado, drebėti iš baimės, verkti iš skausmo*  
 ‘to die of hunger, to shake with fear, to cry in pain’

### 2.2.3. Expressions close to set phrases

This principle of ‘exteriorization’ of the emotion/feeling/sensation referred to by the term in position  $\gamma$  explains that a part of the causal expressions with *iš* are close to set phrases: they are a kind of *clichés*, where one cannot choose freely the terms involved. The list of terms possible in position  $x$  very much depends on the properties of the term in position  $\gamma$  and vice versa. Example (18) displays the type of predicates possible in position  $x$  if we have ‘*baimė*’ (fear) in position  $\gamma$ , and, conversely, (19) presents the list of nouns possible in position  $\gamma$  if we have the process ‘*(pa)šokti*’ (to jump) in position  $x$ .

- (18) (x) *drebėti, urgzti, tirtėti, klykti, sustingti, mirti, \*išblaivėti/ iš baimės*  
 ‘to shake, to grunt, to shudder, to scream, to freeze, to die,  
 \*to sober<sup>11</sup> with fear.’
- (19) (x) (pa)šokti iš *džiaugsmo, netikėtumo, laimės/\*meilės, \*troškulio, \*gailesčio*  
 ‘to leap (up) in joy, with surprise, in happiness / \*love,  
 \*thirst, \*pity’

This phenomenon of ‘set phrases’ is neither surprising nor imputable to the preposition *iš*: the expression of emotions/feelings/sensations obeys certain norms peculiar to each language<sup>12</sup> which correspond to anthropological realities (it turns out that we do not jump with thirst). But the semantics of the preposition *iš* which constructs x as a manifestation of y happens to be perfectly compatible with the expression of these relations.

This is not so with the preposition *nuo* which introduces an autonomous element and which is, for this reason, excluded in this type of interpretation, as we shall see in section 2.3.

#### 2.2.4. Partial overlap between *iš* and the instrumental case

As we have seen, there are two possible constructions for the expression of causal-relations-*clichés*: one, with the preposition *iš* whose application is limited to the expression of involuntary reactions linked to emotions, feelings, internal sensations; the other one, with the instrumental, which has a broader application, as it covers not only the range of uses of *iš*, but also the expression of phenomena linked

<sup>11</sup> Note that the verb *išblaivėti* (‘to sober’) is perfectly possible with the cause *baimė* (fear) if it is introduced by the preposition *nuo*:

(18’) *I parytį nuo /\*iš baim-ės išblaivej-ęs vežėjas*  
 towards.morning *nuo /\*iš* fear-GEN.SG sober-PPA carter  
*rado mirusįjį upėje, atvežė valsčių ir iki pusiaudienio laukė, kol atsibus naminis išguldyti pareigūnai.*  
 ‘Towards morning, sobered up because of the fear, the carter found the dead body in the river, carried it and until noon waited for the local officers to wake up.’

<sup>12</sup> See Leeman (1991) for the French language.

to external causes (see (15) above), an issue to which we shall return after studying the semantics of *nuo*. While one can understand that the respective semantics of the instrumental and of the preposition *iš* allow these markers to express the causal relations between emotions, feelings, internal sensations and the involuntary reactions of their author<sup>13</sup>, the overlap between these two constructions is however only partial.

On the one hand, the two constructions seem to show the following distribution: the instrumental case dominates where the subject refers to a body part<sup>14</sup>, whereas the preposition *iš* dominates where the subject refers to humans. This may be explained by the fact that for the preposition *iš*, it is important that x referred to the author of  $\gamma$  (see point 2.2.2. above).

On the other hand, the interdependence we observed between the type of process and the nature of the emotion/feeling/sensation expressed does not answer the same criteria according to the construction, and the study of the various names of emotion/feeling/sensation possible with such or such construction according to the verb shows it. As a matter of fact, there are some emotions/feelings/sensations which are difficult to view as having a ‘canonical’<sup>15</sup> manifestation. If one can easily imagine, in English, what the manifestations may be of *despair* (crying, screaming, etc.) or *nervousness* (shaking), things get complicated with *hope* or *calm*. It is the same in Lithuanian where the latter 2 are impossible with *iš* (see 20):

- (20) X *iš* *nevilt-ies*,            *iš* *susijaudinim-o* ,  
 X *iš* *despair-GEN.SG* *iš* *nervousness-GEN.SG*  
*iš* *vilt-ies*,            \**iš* *ramyb-ės*  
 \**iš* *hope-GEN.SG* \**iš* *serenity-GEN.SG*  
 ‘X of despair, of nervousness, \*of hope, \*of serenity’

<sup>13</sup> Indeed considering that in *švytėti iš laimės* ‘to glow from happiness’, *glowing* is a manifestation of *happiness* is not very different, from an interpretative point of view, from *švytėti laime<sub>is</sub>* ‘to glow with happiness’, where *glowing* is presented as qualitatively defined by happiness.

<sup>14</sup> See E. Valiūlytė (1998, 349).

<sup>15</sup> We call it ‘canonical’ because the manifestation of emotions/feelings/sensations in languages obeys norms.



But *viltis* (hope) and *ramybė* (calm) can be taken as defining a process by their qualitative properties, and these terms are quite possible in the instrumental case with a verb like *švytėti* (to shine, radiate, glow) (see (10')).

- (10') *švytėti laime/iš laimės, meile/iš meilės, džiaugsmu/iš džiaugsmo, pasididžiavimu/iš pasididžiavimo, ramybe/\*iš ramybės, viltimi/\*iš vilties*  
to shine with happiness, love, joy, pride, serenity, hope

With the instrumental case, it is less a question of cause than of defining the nature of the *glowing* by qualitative properties, and the list of the terms possible in the instrumental case is wide (still, it is limited to positive terms, the verb *švytėti* referring to a positive state itself) (see (21) & (22)).

- (21) *Bruce'as Willisas, kaip visada, švyti vyrišku žavesiu ir sardonišku humoro jausmu./\*iš*  
'Bruce Willis, as always, glows with manly charm and with a sardonic sense of humour.'  
(22) *Jis švyti pasitenkinimu ir sveikata, o akyse negęsta pašaipą. /\*iš*  
'He glows with satisfaction and health, and in his eyes shines a glimmer of irony.'

*Iš*, which can introduce only names of internal emotions/feelings/sensations of the subject, is impossible in these two sentences. With the verb *švytėti*, this preposition can only introduce a few names of emotions/feelings/sensations, whose canonical manifestation is culturally admitted as being 'a glow': that is, in particular, *laimė*, *love*, *džiaugsmas*, *pasididžiavimas* (happiness, love, joy, pride).

While the semantics of *iš* allows this preposition to express any reaction triggered by internal emotions/feelings/sensations, this is not true of the instrumental, for which the relation between the process and the qualifying term must be **typical**. Thus, the instrumental cannot replace the preposition *iš* in a number of instances:

- (23) *užsimerkti iš baimės/\*baimė, iš siaubo/\*siaubu, iš apmaudo/\*apmaudu, iš malonumo/\*malonumu, iš džiaugsmo/\*džiaugsmu, iš skausmo/\*skausmu, iš pykčio/\*pykčiu, etc.*

‘to close one’s eyes in fear, terror, bitterness, pleasure, joy, pain, anger, etc.’

Some processes, like the verb *užsimerkti* (to close one’s eyes) (see (23)), which are on the border between voluntary and involuntary processes and hence cannot be considered as having typical causes or being typical of certain causes, are incompatible with the instrumental.

This limitation does not hold for *iš*—which is not confined to set phrases—and can introduce any internal phenomenon of which the process is the manifestation, whatever type of process it may be, voluntary or not:

- (24) *Jis atsisveikino iš mandagum-o /\*mandagum-u.*  
 he said\_goodbye iš politeness-GEN.SG /\*politeness-INS.SG  
 ‘He said goodbye **out of politeness.**’

In (24), the greeting of the subject (x) is not taken into account as such, but as a pure manifestation of politeness (y), hence the fact that the greeting may be interpreted as not really wished/sincere.

### 2.3. Preposition *nuo*: an autonomous element as origin of the process

#### 2.3.1. Official cause-of-death statements

*Mirti nuo bado* is the least frequent construction, but it is the one used in official or scientific contexts, where the causes of death are researched, established, recorded, classified:

- (25) *Lietuviai įkišo pensininką į jo paties automobilio bagažinę ir paliko nuošaliame miško keliuke. Teismo ekspertai nustatė, kad G. Anderssonas*  
*mir-ė nuo troškul-io, bad-o ir šalč-io.*  
 die-PST.3 nuo thirst-GEN.SG hunger-GEN.SG and cold-GEN.SG  
 ‘The Lithuanians had shoved the pensioner into the trunk of his own car and had abandoned it in a small and remote forest road. Legal experts established that G. Andersson **died of thirst, hunger and cold.**’
- (26) *Be to, Vilniuje jau dirba penki antropologai iš Prancūzijos, kurie sieks nustatyti tikrąsias kariūnų mirties priežastis—nors*

*manoma, kad*  
**kariai mir-ė nuo bad-o ar šalč-io,**  
 soldiers die-PST.3 *nuo* hunger-GEN.SG or cold-GEN.SG  
*bus tirinama, ar mirties priežastis nebuvo kokia nors epidemija.*  
 ‘In addition, 5 French anthropologists, who will seek to establish the real causes of death of the soldiers, are already working in Vilnius. Although we think that **the soldiers died of hunger or cold**, we will consider whether the cause of death was not an epidemic.’

In these contexts, the instrumental or the preposition *iš* are either impossible or considered not as good by informants. Here, death is not taken into account as a manifestation or as a type. The main thing in these contexts is to establish the causes of death in an objective way, which is precisely the specific value of *mirti nuo bado*.

This function of *nuo* which constructs  $\gamma$  as an independent, autonomous and objective cause of death explains:

(i) that  $\gamma$  may correspond to a pronoun, which is not possible with *iš* and the instrumental case:

(27) *Kaime viešpatavo badas.*

**Nuo /\*Iš jo /\*Juo ir mir-ė**  
*nuo /\*iš* 3.GEN.SG. / \*3.INS.SG and die-PST.3  
**visi gyventojai.**  
 all inhabitants

‘In the village famine prevailed. **And this is what all the inhabitants died of.**’

(ii) that *nuo* combines with terms referring to external phenomena (which are not possible with *iš*, see point 2.1.4.):

- Nouns of disease :

*mirti nuo/\*iš vėžio, apendicito, širdies ligos*  
 (‘to die of cancer, appendicitis, heart disease’)

- Nouns of external agent :

*mirti nuo/\*iš perdozuotų narkotikų, peilio dūrio, dvylikos tūkstančių lazdų smūgių, okupanto rankos*  
 (‘to die of overdoses, from a stab, from 12000 blows with a stick, from the hand of the occupier’)

- Abstract Nouns :

*mirti nuo*/\*iš bet kokios priežasties, privataus chirurgo kaltės,  
(‘to die for any reason, by the fault of a private surgeon’<sup>16</sup>)

(iii) that *nuo* is difficult with terms referring to internal sensations:

*mirti nuo/iš troškulio, bado, alkio, šalčio, karščio*  
(‘to die of thirst, hunger<sub>1</sub>, hunger<sub>2</sub>, cold, heat’)

The most frequent nouns of sensation with *nuo* are cold (*šaltis*), heat (*karštis*), and hunger (*badas*), that is terms which can be considered as referring to internal sensations as well as external phenomena<sup>17</sup>. It is interesting to note in this respect that the term *alkis* (hunger as internal sensation), just like the term *troškulys* (thirst), is much more rarely used with the preposition *nuo*: *hunger* (sensation *alkis*) and *thirst* are sensations which can hardly be considered as being autonomous, independent of the subject who feels them (contrary to *cold*, *heat* or *hunger* as lack of food—*badas*).

These terms are not excluded with *nuo*, but they require a context which shows clearly that these sensations are considered as autonomous, objective causes of the process (see (25)). One then understands the opposition between the prepositions *iš* and *nuo* underlined by Valiulytė (1998, 354): the preposition *nuo* is frequent with subjects referring to inanimate elements, the cold, heat, etc., expressed in position *Y* being in this case understood as ‘natural phenomena’, i. e., elements independent of the subject (see for instance *Vanduo nuo šalčio sustingo*

<sup>16</sup> If the phrase *nuo privataus chirurgo kaltės* may seem doubtful at first glance (one would *a priori* expect the preposition *dėl* with a term like *kaltė* ‘fault’), the clarification of the context where this expression occurs permits us to remove all doubt: *Ypač šis skirtumas išryškėja analizuojant medikų atsakomybę ir, galima teigti, kad geriau jau mirti nuo privataus chirurgo kaltės, nes teismas tada nereikalaus įrodyti jo grubios klaidos, o pasitenkins paprasto aplaidumo įrodymu. Tuo tarpu valstybinei ligoninei, kuri turi rūpintis bendru visuomenės interesu, smulkios klaidos, nors ir su ypač skausmingomis pasekmėmis, atleidžiamos. Toks bylų padalijimas tarp administracinių ir civilinių teismų, kuris neegzistuoja anglosaksų teisinėse sistemose turi dar vieną negerovę.* (‘This difference is particularly clear when one analyses the responsibility of physicians and one can argue that it is better **to die due to the fault of a private surgeon**, because in this case, the court will not require the proof of a serious fault, a proof of mere negligence will suffice. Whereas for a public hospital, which has to care for the general interest of society, minor faults, even with very painful consequences, are excused. This distribution of cases between the administrative and civil courts, which does not exist in the Anglo-Saxon legal system, has another drawback.’)

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the difference between *alkis* (hunger<sub>2</sub>) and *badas* (hunger<sub>1</sub>) above.

*į ledą*, ‘Water froze to ice in the cold’), whereas the preposition *iš*, on the contrary, is less frequent with such subjects as it is important for this preposition that the subject be the author of  $x$ .

### 2.3.2. $x$ as an objective autonomous cause

These properties come into play in all the causal uses of the preposition *nuo*. For instance, we note that *nuo* is questionable with terms like *nustebimas* (surprise), *apstulbimas* (astonishment) which refer to sudden and unexpected impressions, which is hard to reconcile with the principle of autonomy of the cause introduced by this preposition. There is no occurrence of a causal *nuo nustebimo/apstulbimo* in the Lithuanian database or on the internet.

(28) *Iš/\*nuo apstulbimo mano akys išsprogo.*

‘My eyes bulged with astonishment.’

(29) *Aš sušukau iš/\*nuo nustebimo.*

‘I let out a cry of surprise.’

It is the same with the feeling of ‘shame’ (*gėda*), which, maybe because it is more intimate, more internal than others, is rare with *nuo* in the causal value. The only example in the Lithuanian database clearly presents the conditions of use of *nuo* (see (30)):

(30) —*Kaip šuva, —tarė K., tartum ši gėda turėtų jį pergyventi.*

*Jozefas K. mirė, kaip ir gyvenė—gėdydamasis.*

*Ir mir-ė jis nuo / ?iš gėd-os.*

and die-PST.3 he *nuo* / ?iš shame-GEN.SG

‘Like a dog’, said K., as if this shame was to survive him. Joseph K. died as he lived, in shame. **And he died [because] of this shame.**’

It clearly appears here that shame has a strong presence in the left context, it has an autonomy and a sufficient independence to function as external cause of the process *mirti* and *iš* is not as good here, although the expression *mirti iš gėdos* (to die of shame) is a *cliché* to express shame to a high degree.

These regularities come into play with all the nouns of sensation used with the preposition *nuo*; cause has a strong autonomy, it is often present in the left context (see the underlined part):

- (31) *Nutraukti bambagyslę su šia sistema kvietė “šoko terapijos” ideologai. Jie įrodinėjo, jog reikia pulti nuogiems į dilgėles ir, **sukand-us dantis nuo skausm-o,** clenched-GER.PST teeth nuo pain-GEN.SG greitai persiorientuoti į kapitalistinius santykius.*  
 ‘The ideologists of the ‘shock therapy’ called for cutting the umbilical cord with this system. They proved that it is necessary to throw oneself nude into nettles, and, **teeth clenched because of the pain,** quickly shift into capitalist relations.’

This consideration of an autonomous element, put in relation with its effects, explains why we have ‘*raitytis nuo skausmo*’ in (32), whereas ‘*raitytis iš skausmo*’ (to writhe in pain) is the *cliché par excellence*.

- (32) *Naktį atvežė jauną merginą, sergančią apendicitu. Ji **raitėsi nuo skausm-o** she writhe.PST.3 nuo pain-GEN.SG ir privalėjau vienas ryžtis operacijai.*  
 ‘One night a woman suffering from appendicitis was brought in. **She writhed from the pain** and I had to make the decision alone to operate on her.’

In this utterance, it is a surgeon who speaks: he observes the symptoms, objectively establishes their cause, and makes the appropriate medical decision. The main thing here is not the expression of a sensation, but the objective statement of a cause and its effects, hence the use of *nuo*.

The semantics of *nuo* explains why this preposition always expresses concrete relations. *Nuo* cannot introduce an image or a metaphor to express a sensation or emotion (cf. the impossibility of *nuo* in (33)).

- (33) *Tėv-ų šird-ys tebe-plyšta*  
 parent-GEN.PL heart-NOM.PL still-split.PRS.3  
*iš/\*nuo skausm-o.*  
*iš/\*nuo pain-GEN.SG*  
*Alytiškė Daiva Anušauskienė niekaip negali susitaikyti su sūnelio Girmanto mirtimi.*  
 ‘**Even now, the heart of the parents is broken in pain.** Daiva Anušauskienė from Alytus can in no way recover from the death of her little boy Girmantas.’

2.3.3. Marginal overlap between *nuo* and *iš* or the instrumental case

None of these properties are shared by the prepositional phrase with *iš*. Moreover, the terms privileged with *nuo* (external causes) are excluded with *iš* and the terms privileged with *iš* (internal states) are difficult with *nuo*. Finally, the overlap between these two prepositions is limited, and one can rarely substitute them for one another in a given context.

These properties of *nuo* are not shared by the construction with the instrumental case either, and even if external causes are not excluded with this construction, the overlap with this preposition remains marginal.

While *nuo* can introduce any kind of external cause—or cause presented as such—the use of the instrumental case is limited to three fields:

(i) Verbs referring to the manifestation of visual properties

- (34) *Piev-a geltonuoja purien-omis.*  
 field-NOM.SG turn.yellow.PRS.3 buttercup-INS.PL  
 ‘The field is bright yellow with buttercups.’

(ii) Verbs of sound

- (35) *Mišk-as skardėjo paukšč-iais.*  
 forest-NOM.SG echo.PST.3 bird-INS.PL  
 ‘The forest echoed with sounds of birds.’

(iii) The verb *lūžti* (to break) in the sense of ‘to give way under the weight of’

- (36) *Sod-ai lūžta obuol-iais.*  
 garden-NOM.PL break.PRS.3 apple-INS.PL  
 ‘The gardens are loaded with apples.’

In these expressions, unlike what happens with the preposition *iš*, the subject which is involved in the process is entirely affected by the properties of the term in the instrumental case, so much as to merge with it: ‘the field becomes buttercups, the forest becomes sounds of birds, the gardens become abundance of apples’. With the instrumental, it is not so much a matter of expressing an external cause than giving a global description of the process by qualitative properties inherited from the term in position  $\gamma$ .

On the one hand, this semantics of the instrumental explains why this construction frequently appears in descriptions of nature in Lithuanian poetry (see (37)) and is often considered by native speakers as poetic in itself.

- (37) *Mišk-ais lyg rūt-a kaln-ai žaliuoja. / ??nuo*  
 forest-INS.PL as rue-INS.PL hill-NOM.PL turn.green /??nuo  
 ‘Hills, with forests and rue covered, turn green.’ (Maironis)

Replacing the instrumental by the preposition *nuo* in this sentence (with a specific word order, rhythm, etc.) would be very difficult; it would reduce the expression of forests and rue to an objective external cause, to a cold statement of the green colour of the Lithuanian countryside, and all poetry would be lost.

On the other hand, as the instrumental case constructs ‘typical’ relations, these expressions, just as for the internal causes, are considered *clichés*. Thus a field can mainly become yellow with ‘buttercups’ (*geltonuoti purienomis*) or a few other flowers typical of Lithuania; colza, which was brought in only recently in Lithuania, is rather introduced by the preposition *nuo*.

- (38) *Piev-a geltonuoja nuo raps-ų / ?raps-ais*  
 field-NOM.SG turn.yellow nuo colza-GEN.PL / ?colza-INS.PL  
 ‘The field is covered with yellow because of the numerous colza flowers.’

Lastly, when the context clearly shows that the cause of a phenomenon is in question, and when it is obviously not describing a phenomenon from the point of view of its qualitative properties, the preposition *nuo* is employed (see (39)).

- (39) —*Kodėl čia taip šviesu?*  
 —*Jau pavasaris—*  
*lauk-ai nuo purien-ų /?purien-omis*  
 field-NOM.PL nuo buttercups-GEN.PL /?buttercups-INS.PL  
*geltonuoja.*  
 turn.yellow.PRS.3  
 —Why is it so light here?  
 —It is spring already: the fields become yellow because of the abundance of buttercups.



### 3. Conclusions

The prepositions *nuo*, *iš* and the instrumental case have the property of expressing causal relations in certain circumstances, depending on the properties of the noun they introduce, of the verb employed, and of the noun subject.

Our hypotheses on their respective semantics allowed us to account for their conditions of use and to show that they give rise to 3 rather different interpretations of what a ‘cause’ may be.

With preposition *nuo*, the cause is an autonomous factor, which is at the origin of the event referred to by the process.

With the instrumental case, the causal interpretation cannot be dissociated from a qualitative characterization of the process.

With preposition *iš*, the cause is interpreted as an abstract notion which manifests itself in the process.

The alleged synonymy of these three constructions thus turns out to be illusory; it breaks down as soon as one looks at the language in actual use and at the nuances of interpretation in the full diversity of contexts. The exploration of the constructions sketched out here is however only partial and the complexity of the phenomena was only just touched on. A detailed study of the different types of predicates and the different types of nouns possible in positions x and y would show new factors of diversification and would reveal other proximities (with the prepositions *dėl* and *per* for instance). An analysis of the position of the constituents in the utterance in relation to intonation would also open new sources of differentiation of the constructions considered and disclose new factors in deployment of meaning<sup>18</sup>. The analysis is in fact necessarily unfinished, as meaning is infinitely subtle and impossible to tackle as a whole.

This analysis of a microscopic fact may appear to be just a simple contribution to the study of certain collocations and idiomatic expressions used in Lithuanian. But its scope is a bit wider.

The hypotheses on the semantics of the three markers concerned are general and permit us to account for all their other uses<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> For an analysis of this type, see de Penaros (2004).

<sup>19</sup> See de Penaros 2013b (in this volume) for a study of another value of the instrumental case and of the preposition *iš*.

This study is also a contribution to research on prepositions and cases. In this respect, we characterized a case and a preposition by a common function—that of *relator*. But the question remains open as to what constitutes the difference between these two categories. Indeed, if we defend the idea that the different forms we can observe in languages are the tracks of as many different linguistic operations, considering that there is no difference between cases and prepositions is not coherent. Our hypothesis is that the difference between the two lies in the type of location they establish, but we leave this question open for further research<sup>20</sup>.

Lastly, this analysis is an occasion to reaffirm that there are no minor facts of language, that ‘idiomatic’ expressions do not constitute unanalysable blocks, but are the results of the interactions of the forms which constitute them. As such, they are just as important to the linguist as any other fact of language. They may even be a precious element contributing to a better understanding of how language functions when they reveal an abyss of complexity, where at first glance one imagined homogeneity.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACC — accusative, ALL — allative, DAT — dative, GEN — genitive,  
 GER — gerund, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, LOC — locative,  
 NEG — negation, NOM — nominative, PL — plural, POSS — possessive,  
 POST — postposition, PPA — past active participle, PRS — present,  
 PST — past, REFL — reflexive, SG — singular, SUBJ — subject

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<sup>20</sup> See de Penanros 2013a for an analysis of this question.

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