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The semantic effects of the Subject Genitive of Negation in Lithuanian¹

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The paper is aimed at investigating the semantic and pragmatic effects of the alternations between the Nominative and the Genitive cases in intransitive negated sentences in Lithuanian. Particular attention is paid to the uses of the Subject Genitive of Negation in constructions with verbs of perception. The use of Subject GEN.NEG in Lithuanian depends on the semantics of the predicate verb, on the perspective structure of the sentence, and on whether the sentence is existential or locative. In terms of meaning, the subjects marked Nominative are committed to exist, whereas the subjects marked Genitive carry no such commitment. In fact, in our proposal the use of Genitive case in negated intransitive sentences implicates a lack of existential commitment or, depending on the available contextual information, the non-existence of a subject referent in the location in question or in the world itself. These implicatures are cancellable and calculable, and display the properties of generalised conversational implicatures of quantity. A proposal for mapping the scale of existential commitment onto the sentence types—locative sentences, conventional existential sentences and sentences of localised existence—is also laid out.

Keywords: Lithuanian language, Genitive case, sentential negation, conversational implicature, presupposition, existential sentence, locative sentence, existential commitment

0. Introduction

In Lithuanian, as well as in some other Balto-Slavic and Balto-Finnic languages, the Genitive case occasionally gets assigned to structural arguments that otherwise take Nominative or Accusative case. One

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such use² of Genitive is ‘the Genitive of Negation’ (GEN.NEG³) which involves substituting the Genitive case for Accusative (on objects of transitive verbs) or Nominative (on subjects with a number of intransitive verbs) when the whole sentence is negated (see Ambrazas *et al.* 1997b, 486, 666 for a traditional description of this phenomenon in Lithuanian). In some languages these alternations have become strongly grammaticalised (Object GEN.NEG in Polish or Lithuanian), in others there is greater or lesser variation in case alternation patterns (Russian GEN.NEG, Lithuanian Subject GEN.NEG) (for a cross-linguistic distribution of GEN.NEG see Kagan 2010, 22). In Lithuanian, ACC substitution by Object GEN.NEG in negated sentences is universal, whereas in Russian the use of GEN OR ACC in negated sentences depends on various other factors, for example, ‘[g]enitive indirectly signals a decrease in specificity or referentiality, often implicating non-existence in a given location, or absence from an observer’s perceptual field’ (Borshev *et al.* 2008)⁴. In Lithuanian, similar patterns of decreased referentiality can be observed in Subject NOM—GEN alternation in negated intransitive sentences when the existence of something is denied.

The generalised syntactic constraint on the GEN.NEG in Russian has been formulated as follows: “Gen Neg and Gen Int occur only with ‘structural arguments’ of the verb, subjects or objects which are direct (not prepositional) arguments of the verb and which would otherwise take Nom or Acc. Subject Gen Neg occurs only with intransitive verbs.” (Partee *et al.* 2012, 3). This constraint also seems to hold for Lithuanian, if we accept that the reflexive forms of the verbs of perception in Lithuanian can be treated as intransitive due to the detransitivising function of the reflexive, cf. (1) where an example of Subject NOM—GEN alternation depending on sentential negation in sentences with a verb of perception—*girdėti* (‘to hear’)—is provided:

² Based on Russian data, Kagan (2010, 18) distinguishes at least three types of such ‘non-canonical’ uses of Genitive: the already mentioned Genitive of Negation, Intensional Genitive, and Partitive Genitive. All three can also be found in Lithuanian and are discussed to a lesser or greater extent in this paper.

³ In this paper I use the following abbreviations in addition to those used in glossing: GEN.NEG — Genitive of Negation, GEN.INT — Genitive of Intensionality, GEN.IND.Q — Genitive of Indefinite Quantity, NES — Negative Existential Sentences.

⁴ On Object GEN.NEG in Russian one might wish to consult the collection of papers in Rachilina (2008) and, especially from a formal semantic point of view, Kagan (2012). I am grateful to an anonymous *Baltic Linguistics* reviewer for drawing my attention to these two references.

- (1) a. *Vėl pa-si-gird-o šaiž-us*
 again PFV-REFL-hear-PST.3 strident-NOM.SG.M
vad-o įsakym-as.
 commander-GEN.SG order-NOM.SG⁵
 ‘Again there came a strident commander’s order.’
 (Juozas Tumas. *Kelias į Červėnę*. www.angelfire.com/de/Cerskus/Igumene.html)
- b. *Tilt-el-yje es-ant-ys įgul-os*
 bridge-DIM-LOC.SG be-PPRA-NOM.PL.M crew-GEN.SG
nari-ai drąsin-o kanonieri-us, bet
 member-NOM.PL encourage-PST.3 cannoneers-ACC.PL but
vad-o įsakym-o vis ne-si-girdėj-o.
 commander-GEN.SG order-GEN.SG PTC NEG-REFL-hear.PST-3
 ‘Crew members on the bridge were encouraging cannoneers
 by calling to them but no order from the commander could
 be heard yet.’
 (Corpus of Contemporary Lithuanian. www.tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas)

Sentences with the reflexive forms of otherwise transitive verbs of perception predicate the property of being perceived in a particular way (e. g., *girdėtis* ‘to be heard/audible’, *matytis* ‘to be seen/visible’, *jaustis* ‘to be felt’) to the syntactic subject⁶. In the corresponding transitive sentences, ‘the perceiver’ is expressed as a syntactic subject and ‘the perceived’— as a syntactic object marked Accusative, cf. (1c).

- (1) c. *Įgul-os nari-ai iš-gird-o įsakym-q.*
 crew-GEN.SG member-NOM.PL PFV-hear-PST.3 order-ACC.SG
 ‘The crew members have heard the order.’

⁵ Most of the examples provided are naturally occurring and were collected from the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language (<http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas>) and Google search; their sources are provided. Some of the examples were taken from the works of other authors; in these cases, the corresponding work is referenced. In cases where no source is specified, the sentences were constructed and their grammaticality was attested by the author of this publication, who is a native speaker of Lithuanian.

⁶ What is said about the constructions with reflexives of verbs of perception in this paragraph also applies to the constructions with the copular *būti* and the infinitive of verbs of perception, e. g., *buvo girdėti* ‘was heard/audible’, *buvo matyti* ‘was seen/visible’, *(yra) justi* ‘is felt’. NB: in Lithuanian, copular *būti* is often omitted in the present tense.

As already seen in examples (1a–b), in sentences with the reflexives of verbs of perception ‘the perceived’ is promoted to a syntactic subject and ‘the perceiver’ becomes somehow irrelevant to what is said. For these reasons—the effect of the reflexive on the meaning of the verbs of perception and on the syntactic structure of a sentence—sentences with the reflexives of verbs of perception are considered intransitive in this paper.

More examples of Subject NOM—GEN alternations in negated sentences are provided in (2)–(4), including (4) with the verb *būti* ‘to be’. Besides the existential *būti* (cf. Holvoet 2005; Mikulskas 2009 on different types of this Lithuanian verb), intransitive verbs which condition GEN marking of the subject under sentential negation, but do not always or necessarily do so, are generally related to perception, as seen in sentence (1), or emergence, as in (2) and (3).

(2) a. *Taigi Dievas veikia istorijoje.*

Jis ne-lik-o praeit-yje.

3.NOM.SG.M NEG-remain-PST.3 past-LOC.SG

‘[So God acts in history.] He didn’t remain in the past.’

(www.bernardinai.lt/straipsnis/-/31667)

(2) b. *Kuršėn-uose ne-lik-o darb-o — ∅*

Kuršėnai-LOC.PL NEG-remain-PST.3 job-GEN.SG COP

uždaryt-a plyt-ų gamykl-a.

close.PPP-NOM.SG.F brick-GEN.PL factory-NOM.SG

‘There was no job left in Kuršėnai—the brick factory was closed.’

(www.verslobanga.lt/lt/leidinys.full/44a4fc895482c)

(3) a. *Ilgai lauki-au vaik-o, kur-is*

long wait-PST.1SG child-GEN.SG who-NOM.SG.M

iš-tart-ų panaš-ius žodži-us. Vaik-o

PFV-utter-SBJV.3 similar-ACC.PL.M word-ACC.PL child-GEN.SG

ne-at-si-rad-o.

NEG-PFV-REFL-find.PST.3

‘I have waited a long time for a child who would utter similar words. No such child appeared.’

(www.balsas.lt/komentarai/ar-sajudininkai-gali-buti-geri-pulkininkai/2665673269/naujausi-virsuje)

b. *Tačiau toki-a lygyb-ės samprat-a*
 however such-NOM.SG.F equality-GEN.SG conception-NOM.SG
ne-at-si-rad-o iš niekur.

NEG-PFV-REFL-find-PST.3 from nowhere

‘However, such a conception of equality has not appeared out of nowhere.

(Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language.

www.tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas)

(4) a. *Kas ne-buvo konferencij-oje, turè-tų*
 who.NOM NEG-be.PST.3 conference-LOC.SG have-SBJV.3
pa-si-gailèti.

PFV-REFL-regret.INF

‘Those who didn’t go to the conference should regret it.’

(banga.balsas.lt/lt/2forum.

[showPosts/663898.621.1-\(199812724\)](http://showPosts/663898.621.1-(199812724)))

b. *Mokykl-oje ne-buvo fizik-os mokytoj-o.*
 school-LOC.SG NEG-be.PST.3 physics-GEN.SG teacher-GEN.SG

‘There was no physics teacher at the school.’

(mokyklanamie.church.lt/parama.htm)

The sentences in (3) are particularly interesting for further analysis. (3a) illustrates how closely GEN.INT and GEN.NEG can sometimes be interrelated. The nominal *vaiko* in the first sentence is marked GEN.INT and has no clear referent (‘I was waiting for *any* child’). The intensional reading of the first sentence facilitates the use of GEN.NEG in the negated sentence⁷. Had the nominal of the first sentence had an identifiable referent (e. g., *ieškojau to vaiko*, ‘I was waiting for *that* child’), one would most likely expect Subject NOM in the succeeding negated sentences (*Vaikas:NOM neatsirado*). (3b) also shows that when the referent can be clearly identified (‘*such* a conception of equality’), the Nominative case tends to be preferred.

In this paper, I examine the semantic and pragmatic properties and constraints of Lithuanian Subject GEN.NEG by paying particular attention to the uses of Subject GEN.NEG in constructions with verbs

⁷ Cf. Semėnienė (2005) for a quantitative investigation of the factors determining the use of GEN.NEG in negated intransitive sentences.

of perception. The motivation behind this choice is that the NOM—GEN alternations in the latter constructions, as compared to those with the verb *būti* ('to be') and verbs of emergence, have received little attention in works on Lithuanian. The use of GEN and NOM in subject position in Lithuanian shows variation depending on the semantics of the predicate verb, the perspective structure of the sentence, and on whether the sentence is existential or locative. Following previous studies on Russian, which have shown that the use of GEN.NEG indirectly signals the decreased referentiality and the absence (non-existence) of a thing in question in the location, one could hypothesise that the Lithuanian Subject GEN.NEG could also function as a marker of the lack of existential commitment, i. e., as a marker of 'the absence of commitment that the NP has a referent' (Kagan 2010, 21) in the location. In order to account for such lack of existential commitment pragmatically, we propose treating the constructions with Subject GEN.NEG in Lithuanian as generalised conversational implicatures. In addition, we suggest that as a non-committing device and because of its effect on the 'semantic bleaching' of verbs, Subject GEN.NEG is a marker of negative existential sentences⁸.

The paper is aimed at investigating the semantic and pragmatic effects of Subject NOM—GEN alternations in intransitive negated sentences; but before doing so some necessary background information is provided. The first section introduces the reader to the uses of the Genitive case in Lithuanian and to the verbs governing the Genitive case, most of which do not presuppose the existence of a (definite) object. In the second section, a short overview of the traditional grammar works on Lithuanian Subject GEN.NEG and GEN.INT is provided. The third section is dedicated to the discussion of the information structure and perspective structure of locative and existential sentences and their link to the Subject NOM—GEN alternations in negated intransitive sentences of Lithuanian. The fourth section is dedicated to testing the nature of the commitment to (non-)existence in negated intransitive sentences with the verbs of perception, depending on whether the subject of these sentences is

⁸ Mikulskas (2009, 125) explains the use of Genitive in negated existential sentences by the need to quantify a thing whose existence is stated (or negated) by the existential predicate; in locative sentences, the subject referent cannot be quantified because it is uniquely identified and, therefore, maintains the Nominative case even under negation.

marked GEN or NOM, in the following order: (1) the presupposed existence in sentences with Subject NOM; (2) the non-presuppositional nature of the lack of existential commitment and the commitment to non-existence in sentences with Subject GEN.NEG; and (3) the conversational implicatures arising from the use of Subject GEN.NEG with the verbs of perception. In the fifth section the proposal for mapping the scale of the existential commitment onto the sentence types, locative and existential, is laid out, followed by concluding remarks.

1. The uses of the Genitive case in Lithuanian

Before focusing on the semantic and pragmatic effects of Subject GEN.NEG, it is necessary to list the most common semantic types of the Genitive case; this will also facilitate the readability of the examples presented herein:

- 1) *Adnominal Genitive*, e. g., *Karolio:GEN saksofonas* ‘Karolis’s saxophone’, *šeimos:GEN verslas* ‘family business’, *arbatos:GEN puodelis* ‘a teacup’, etc.;
- 2) *Genitive of Purpose*, usually occurring with verbs of motion or interruption of motion (Ambrasas *et al.* 1997b, 505; cf. 1997a, 551), e. g. *Atėjau cukraus:GEN* ‘I’ve come for some sugar (to get some sugar)’; *Nubėk peilio:GEN* ‘Run for a knife (to get a knife)’;
- 3) *Genitive of Indefinite Quantity*, or *Partitive Genitive*⁹, used mainly with numerals (teens, tens, hundreds, etc.) and mass and plural nouns to show that something is part of a whole, e. g., *puodelis arbatos:GEN* ‘a cup of tea’; *Paduok kreidos:GEN* ‘Give me some (of the) chalk’; *vienuolika litrų:GEN giros:GEN* ‘eleven litres of kvass’;
- 4) *Genitive of Negation*, the phenomenon in which Object ACC of transitive sentences and Subject NOM of intransitive sentences are substituted by GEN.NEG in a negated sentence;

⁹ In many linguistic works (including Lithuanian traditional grammar) Partitive GEN and GEN.IND.Q are treated as the same phenomenon and thus the terms are used interchangeably. However, in my view, Partitive GEN and GEN.IND.Q are slightly different phenomena—Partitive GEN (quantification over a definite quantity; *part* < *whole* relationship) can be thought of as a type of GEN.IND.Q (quantification over indefinite quantity); cf. these sentences in English: *Give me some of the chalk (that is on the table).* vs. *Give me some chalk (in general).*

- 5) *Genitive of Intensionality*, occurring with most of the intensional transitive verbs like ‘to seek’, ‘to search for’, ‘to wait for’, etc.; e. g., *ieškau muzikos mokytojo:GEN* ‘I’m looking for a teacher of music’ in which ‘a teacher’ may refer to (1) a specific teacher of music, the one I know, or (2) any teacher who teaches music.

In this paper, I focus on the semantic effects and constraints on the Subject GEN.NEG. HOWEVER, GEN.IND.Q and GEN.INT are also important for the discussion, for two different reasons: (1) due to their often overlapping distribution GEN.NEG and GEN.IND.Q often interact, which sometimes makes it problematic to separate the semantic effects of the indefinite/partitive reading and the existential commitment¹⁰; (2) some findings about the relationship between Subject GEN.NEG and the existential commitment may prove applicable to the interpretation of GEN.INT (cf. Kagan 2010 on a unified account for GEN.NEG and GEN.INT in Russian based on the existential commitment; also Partee 2008).

In Lithuanian the Genitive case is governed by a specific group of verbs presented in *Table 1* below (cf. Ambrasas *et al.* 1997a, 510; 1997b, 486–487):

Table 1. Verbs governing the Genitive case

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ‘to wish’ | <i>norėti</i> ‘to wish/want’, <i>geisti</i> ‘to desire/crave’, <i>ilgėtis</i> ‘to long for’, <i>laukti</i> ‘to wait’, <i>trokšti</i> ‘to desire’, <i>tikėtis</i> ‘to hope’ |
| ‘to seek’ / ‘to search’ | <i>ieškoti</i> ‘to search for’, <i>dairytis</i> ‘to look for’, <i>žvalgytis</i> ‘to look for’, <i>graibytis</i> ‘to grope for’, <i>siekti</i> ‘to seek for’ |
| ‘to be afraid of’ | <i>bijoti</i> ‘to be afraid of’, <i>baimintis</i> ‘to fear’, <i>išsigąsti</i> ‘to get scared of’, <i>baidytis</i> ‘to shy at’, <i>drovėtis</i> ‘to be shy of’ |
| ‘to avoid’ | <i>vengti</i> ‘to avoid’, <i>šalintis</i> ‘to shun’, <i>saugotis</i> ‘to watch out for’, <i>atsikratyti</i> ‘to get rid of’, <i>atsižadėti</i> ‘to renounce’ |

¹⁰ For this reason and in order to eliminate the noise in the analysis, the subject of most of the examples used in this paper is singular.

Continuation of Table 1

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| ‘to lack’ | <i>stigi</i> ‘to be short of’, <i>stokoti</i> ‘to lack’, <i>trūkti</i> ‘to lack’ |
| ‘to need’ | <i>reikėti</i> ‘to need’ |
| ‘to ask’ / ‘to demand’ | <i>klausti</i> ‘to ask (a question)’, <i>melsti</i> ‘to pray for’, <i>maldauti</i> ‘to beg for’, <i>prašyti</i> ‘to ask (for smth)’, <i>teirautis</i> ‘to inquire for’, <i>reikalauti</i> ‘to demand/re- quire something, <i>pageidauti</i> ‘to request something |

Most of these verbs are intensional, or can trigger an intensional reading. Interestingly, this picture corresponds to the general pattern of the distribution of GEN.NEG and GEN.INT cross-linguistically:

in those [Balto-Slavic—S.A.] languages, in which Genitive of Negation is obligatory, the intensional verbs in question generally take genitive objects. In those languages in which Genitive of Negation is optional, as it is in Russian, intensional verbs also license both genitive and accusative objects. (Kagan 2010, 21)

The verbs in the table also share one key commonality—they do not presuppose the existence of the (definite) referent of their direct object, and those bearing the meaning ‘to lack’ and ‘to need’ even suggest the absence of such a referent. I am inclined to argue that this is their main property facilitating the use of GEN in these environments and that it is also a property shared by the sentences with Subject GEN.NEG.

2. Subject GEN.NEG in the traditional grammar of Lithuanian

According to the traditional grammar, Subject GEN.NEG in Lithuanian occurs only with certain verbs like (1) *būti* ‘to be’, its aspectual variant *likti* ‘to remain’, and (2) the infinitive of verbs of perception such as *ne(be)matyti* ‘not to see (any longer)’, *ne(be)girdėti* ‘not to hear (any longer)’, *ne(be)jausti* ‘not to feel (any longer)’ and their reflexive derivatives (Ambrazas *et al.* 1997b, 668, cf. 476). It has been suggested that the use of Genitive in the case of the verbs *būti* and *likti* depends on the scope of negation, i. e., “[i]f the subject is not within the scope of negation it retains its [Nominative] case from syntactic status” and

“[i]f the subject comes within the scope of negation it is transformed into an *object* in the genitive case; thus the negation is extended over the entire statement” (emphasis mine— S.A.) (Ambrazas *et al.* 1997b, 668).

One should be aware of inconsistencies within the works of Lithuanian traditional grammar. In *The Contemporary Lithuanian Grammar* (1997a), it is suggested that Subject NOM of affirmative sentences is **always** transformed into Subject GEN.NEG in negated sentences when the predicate is either (1) the 3rd person form of the verb *būti* ‘to be’ (or its synonym¹¹) or (2) the infinitive of verbs of perception (alone or with copula—the 3rd person form of word *būti* ‘to be’) (Ambrazas *et al.* 1997a, 584; cf. 625). However, in the English version (1997b) it is proposed that “[t]he genitive case is used instead of the nominative with the negative form of *būti* ‘be’ to express absence of the indefinite subject referent in the place indicated”¹² (Ambrazas *et al.* 1997b, 476) and the following examples are provided:

- (5) a. *Vyr-ų kiem-e ne-buvo.* (Ambrazas *et al.* 1997b)
 man-GEN.PL yard-LOC.SG NEG-be.PST.3
 ‘There were no men in the yard.’
- b. *Vyr-ai buvo kiem-e.*
 man-NOM.SG be.PST.3 yard-LOC.SG
 ‘The men were in the yard.’
- c. *Vyr-ai kiem-e ne-buvo.*
 man-NOM.SG yard-LOC.SG NEG-be.PST.3
 ‘The men were not in the yard.’

Sentence (5c) demonstrates that, in contrast to what was said in the Lithuanian version (1997a), Subject NOM may also occur in negated

¹¹ Note, however, that the syntactic behaviour of the verb *egzistuoti* ‘to exist’—a synonym of *būti*, differs notably from the latter (cf. Kalėdaitė 2012, 202), especially in sentences which are not related to any particular location, e. g. *Vienaragiai neegzistuoja.* (‘Unicorns:NOM don’t exist’). According to the Perspective Structure (see section 3.2), it may be suggested that *egzistuoti* (and its negated version) usually takes a THING as a departure point of structuring a situation (i. e., Perspectival centre) which is presupposed to exist and, therefore, receives NOM marking. Similarly in English, *to exist* is used in non-locative sentences, whereas *to be* is ungrammatical in such environments, cp. *Unicorns do (not) exist*, and **Unicorns are (not)*. This leads to believe that the existential verb *to be* makes location central in a proposition, even if that location may sometimes be implied and not explicitly indicated, and thus facilitates GEN.NEG marking of the Subject nominal.

¹² See Holvoet and Tamulionienė (2006) on the marking of (in)definiteness in Lithuanian.

sentences with the predicate *būti*. Moreover, as seen earlier in sentences (1) to (3) and as presented later in this paper, this also applies to all other verbs with which Subject GEN.NEG can occur. The question to be answered then is which factors determine the choice between Subject NOM and Subject GEN in negated intransitive sentences in Lithuanian.

3. The information structure and the perspective structure of the sentences with Subject GEN.NEG

The alternations between Subject GEN or NOM in negated intransitive sentences are often interpreted in terms of the opposition between locative and existential sentences and the *Theme-Rheme* (or *topic-comment*) structure of a sentence (Holvoet 2005). The theme of an existential sentence usually indicates the place in which a thing (marked GEN) is said to exist and its rheme contains information about the existence of that thing. In locative sentences, the existence of a thing (always marked NOM) is presupposed and the rheme contains information only about the presence of that thing in a certain place (cf. Holvoet 2005, 140). Consequently, Holvoet proposes that there are two distinct homonyms of the verbs *būti* ‘to be’: 1) existential *būti* which is used in existential sentences and 2) copular *būti* which is used in locative sentences and whose meaning is hardly identifiable (Holvoet 2005, 141; cf. Mikulskas 2009, 123–129 on these two meanings of *būti*). He also posits that due to its existential aspects Subject GEN.NEG is one of the key instruments to test the existential status of *būti* (*ibid.*, 145). As proposed in this paper, this can be extended further to suggest that Subject GEN.NEG (where it occurs) is the main analytic tool to test the existential status of negated sentences.

The Theme-Rheme model, however, is insufficient to give a full account of the uses of Subject GEN.NEG. There are some negated sentences with the subject marked GEN which pose significant problems to the locative-existential classification due to: (1) their *marked information structure* (Holvoet 2005, 142), as in (5a), where the theme contains both the subject marked GEN (*vyrų*) and the location (*kieme*); and (2) the *contextual presupposition of the existence* of a subject referent, as in (6) where the existence of the referent of the pronominal *jo* in the second clause is presupposed from the first clause:

- (6) *Pa-skambin-au Jon-ui, bet jo ne-buvo*
 PFV-call-PST.1SG John-DAT but 3.GEN.SG.M NEG-be.PST.3
namie. (Holvoet 2005)
 home
 ‘I called John but he wasn’t at home.’

In sentences like (6), which looks similar to locative sentences, NOM would be considered less usual even though the subject here is clearly identified and occurs in a theme. Similarly unusual would be NOM in (5a)—if NOM was to be used there, one would expect the sentence *Vyrai:NOM buvo ne kieme* (NB: change in scope of negation) instead (cf. Mikulskas 2009, 125). Some authors (e. g., Babby 1980, 124–127 for Russian) would treat sentences like (5a) or (6) as non-existential. Holvoet (2005), however, points out that Theme-Rheme structure is insufficient to reject the existential interpretation of the verb *būti* and regards these sentences as existential sentences of localised existence¹³.

As an alternative, Holvoet (2005) suggested applying a *Perspective Structure* approach, originally derived by Partee and Borschev (2002) for Russian data, in order to account for the NOM—GEN case alternations in negated intransitive sentences in Lithuanian. The authors argue that it is not the information, but the perspective structure that distinguishes existential sentences in Russian (cf. Borschev and Partee 2002, Partee and Borschev 2007, Paducheva 2008, 150). The main principles of Perspective Structure are the following (Partee and Borschev 2004; Partee *et al.* 2012):

- 1) ‘*Existence is relative*’ principle: existence is always relative to a location.
- 2) *Perspective Structure*: an ‘existence/location’ BE(THING, LOC)¹⁴ may be structured from the perspective of the THING or of the LOCATION.
- 3) *Perspectival centre Presupposition*: any *Perspectival centre* must be normally presupposed to exist.
- 4) *The semantics of NES*’s: a NES denies the existence of thing(s) de-

¹³ The distinction between locative sentences and existential sentences is also discussed in Mikulskas (2006, 123–129 and 2009, 34–41). For a thorough discussion on this matter in Russian one might wish to consult Paducheva (2008).

¹⁴ Here BE refers to the existential verb, THING—to an existing object, LOCATION—to a region of existence.

scribed by the subject NP in *the Perspectival centre location* (not necessarily ‘in the world’).

- 5) *Presupposed equivalence*: a NES presupposes that the following equivalence holds locally in the given context of utterance

$v(\text{THING, LOC}) \leftrightarrow \text{BE}(\text{THING, LOC})$, i. e., in NES for a thing ‘to verb’ in a given LOCATION means for it ‘to be’ in that LOCATION, cf. in (1b), (2b), or (3a).

The term *Perspectival centre* is used for the speaker’s chosen point of departure for structuring the situation. If a subject (or THING) is placed in Perspectival centre as in (7a) then it is presupposed to exist and receives NOM marking. The existence of the location in such sentences is not defined, i. e., (7a) would be true even if there was no concert at all. Conversely, if a location gets in Perspectival centre as in (7b) or in (7c), a subject bears no existential commitment and is marked GEN. According to this approach, (7c) is still treated as an existential sentence.

- (7) a. *Student-ai ne-buvo koncert-e.*
 student-NOM.PL NEG-be.PST.3 concert-LOC.SG
 ‘The students were not at a/the concert.’
- b. *Koncert-e ne-buvo student-ų.*
 concert-LOC.SG NEG-be.PST.3 student-GEN.PL
 ‘There were no students at the concert.’
- c. *Student-ų ne-buvo koncert-e.* (alternative word
 student-GEN.PL NEG-be.PST.3 concert-LOC.SG order)
 ‘There were no students in the concert.’

The advantages of the Perspective structure over the Theme-Rheme model is that it focuses on the semantic-pragmatic aspects of a sentence and incorporates the existential commitment of the subject argument as well as the importance of the semantic emptiness of a verb (as outlined in the principle of presupposed equivalence above) in order for its argument to take GEN.NEG marking. Note that according to this approach, besides the sentences with the existential verb *būti* ‘to be’, the sentences of Lithuanian with the verbs of perception also classify as existential sentences; thus, the same view is adopted in this paper. *Table 2* summarises the interaction among the Perspective Structure, the Theme-Rheme structure and case marking in ne-

gated intransitive sentences in which the equivalence $v(\text{THING}, \text{LOC}) \leftrightarrow \text{BE}(\text{THING}, \text{LOC})$ holds:

Table 2. The relation between Perspective Structure, Theme-Rheme structure and subject case marking

| Sentence type | Locative sentences | Existential (localised existence) | Existential sentences |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Perspectival centre | <i>THING</i> | <i>LOCATION</i> | <i>LOCATION</i> |
| Theme | <i>THING</i> | <i>THING</i> | <i>PLACE</i> |
| Subject case marking | <i>NOM</i> | <i>GEN</i> | <i>GEN</i> |

The use of *NOM* in the negated intransitive sentences is limited to a theme, where the existence of the subject is always presupposed and where the subject has an identifiable referent. Meanwhile, in existential sentences (conventional and of localised existence), Subject *GEN.NEG* can appear both in the theme and in the rheme; it can refer to a previously identified referent and to an unknown referent or have no identifiable referent at all. There is a strong tendency for the subjects marked *GEN.NEG* to refer to an unidentified referent and to appear in the rheme of existential sentences. However, only the perspectival structure can account for the use of Subject *GEN.NEG* in sentences of localised existence: even the subjects that appear in the theme and have an identified referent are marked *GEN* if the utterance is organised from the perspective of the *LOCATION* rather than of the *THING* and the existence of the referent in that location is not presupposed.

4. The semantic and pragmatic effects of the Subject *NOM—GEN* alternation in negated sentences (informal analysis)

Overall, the use of Subject *NOM* commits the speaker to the existence of a subject referent. Conversely, Subject *GEN.NEG*—and *GEN.INT*—signals a lack of such commitment and can therefore be treated as a *non-committing device*. The motivation is the following: speakers will

make a point of using Subject NOM rather than Subject GEN when they wish to emphasise that they are committing themselves to believe that the subject referent exists. The question of the nature of this lack of existential commitment remains. In the following pages, I intend to show that, for Lithuanian data, Subject NOM in negated sentences presupposes the existence of a subject referent and Subject GEN.NEG conversationally implies a lack of existence of a subject referent (in the speaker's perception field or in the location in question, not necessarily in the world itself). In order to show this, semantic and pragmatic tests are applied to sentences with the reflexives of perceptual verbs *matytis* ('to be seen/visible'), *girdėtis* ('to be heard/audible') and *jaustis* ('to be felt'). Testing the nature of the existential commitment in sentences with the verb *būti* 'to be' would complicate the analysis and introduce a considerable amount of undesirable confusion because in existential sentences with *būti* the (non-)existence of a subject referent is part of what is explicitly said and not just implied. In addition, the choice to exploit verbs of perception in such analysis facilitates the demonstration of the semantic-bleaching effect that Subject GEN.NEG has on the verbs it occurs with. Also, as mentioned earlier, in this paper, sentences with verbs of perception, which structurally look the same as existential sentences (including the sentences of localised existence) with the verb *būti* 'to be', are treated as existential sentences (cf. section 3); thus, the points raised in the following pages can be extended to negated existential sentences in general.

4.1. The existential commitment in the negated sentences with Subject NOM

By 'existential commitment' Kagan (2010) means 'existential entailment and/or existential presupposition' (Kagan 2010, 23). A noun phrase is said to carry existential commitment only if the sentence in which it appears either entails or presupposes that the NP has a referent (or quantifies over a non-empty set)' (*ibid.*). According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP), presupposition is 'the phenomenon whereby speakers mark linguistically the information that is presupposed or taken for granted, rather than being part of the main propositional content of a speech act' (Beaver and Geurts 2011). Thus, as a part of

the common ground, presupposition contrasts with what is asserted by an utterance. The main defining characteristics of presuppositions are that (1) the truth value of presuppositions, similarly to the truth value of entailments, affects the truth value of a statement; and that (2) presuppositions, opposite to entailments, escape negation, i. e., the presupposition remains after the whole statement is negated. To test for the existential commitment of sentences with the subject marked NOM, we can use the classical formalisation of *Frege-Strawson presupposition* (FSP; cited from Burton-Roberts 1997, 67):

FSP-a: A presupposes B if and only if A is neither true nor false if B is not true.¹⁵

FSP-b: A presupposes B if and only if both A and the-negation-of-A entail B.

In affirmative sentences, Subject NOM gives rise to a strong entailment and/or presupposition of existence and in negated sentences like (8) Subject NOM triggers a presupposition of existence of a subject referent, and not an entailment:

(8) a. *Mergait-ė ne-si-mat-o nuotrauk-oje,*
 girl-NOM.SG NEG-REFL-see-PRS.3 picture-LOC.SG
 [*nes ją užstoja klasiokas*].

‘The girl can’t be seen in the picture because a classmate stands in front of her.’

b. The girl is in the picture.

A presupposes B.

In the example, negation cancels the entailment of the subject’s existence but it preserves the presupposition. By saying that ‘The girl:NOM can’t be seen in the picture’, the speaker presupposes that the girl nonetheless is present. If the presupposition is false, however, and the girl is not present in the picture, it does not make the proposition entirely false, rather it leads to a truth value gap—the girl is not present in the picture and at the same time she has to be in the picture for a speaker

¹⁵ Bertrand Russell (1905; cited from Asudeh 2012, 2–3) believed that false presuppositions make the entire statement false but this view was originally criticised by Peter Strawson (1950; cited from *ibid.*) on the basis that such a view contradicts our semantic intuitions. The latter view seems to be prevalent to this day.

to assert that she cannot be seen in it¹⁶. Note that the meaning of the verb *matyti* here contains only the property of ‘being seen/visible’ (the primary meaning of the verb).

Another defining feature of presuppositions is that they, in contrast to entailments, are **cancelable** (cf. Beaver and Geurts 2011 in SEP). The existential commitment implied (not implicated—*sic!*) by the use of Subject NOM in negated sentences seems to satisfy this condition too. The direct cancellation of presupposition often seems odd and infelicitous but put in certain contexts—e. g. formulations similar to *I suppose you could say that A, but ¬B*¹⁷ (cf. Asudeh 2012, 4)—usually proves to give well-formed results as in the following examples:

- (9) [*Manau, galėtume sakyti, kad*
lėl-ė ne-si-mat-o nuotrauk-oje –
 doll-NOM.SG NEG-REFL-see-PRS.3 picture-LOC.SG
[bet jos ten nėra].
 ‘I suppose we could say that the doll isn’t visible in the picture, [but it’s not even there].’
- (10) a. [*Manau, galėtume sakyti, kad*
šalt-is ne-si-jauči-a, [bet juk nėra šalta].
 cold-NOM.SG NEG-REFL-feel.PRS-3
 ‘I suppose we could say that the frost isn’t felt, but it’s not frosty.’
- (11) [*Manau, galėtume sakyti, kad*
baim-ė jo bals-e ne-si-gird-i –
 fear-NOM.SG 3.GEN.SG.M voice-LOC.SG NEG-REFL-hear-PRS.3
[bet juk jis nebijo].
 ‘I suppose we could say that the fear can’t be heard in his voice, but he has no fear.’

In order to be consistent, one might wish to apply the same test to demonstrate that the subject marked NOM in affirmative locative sentences works not as a presupposition but as an entailment of existence

¹⁶ Note, that we run into a very similar problem/ambiguity as captured in the famous sentence ‘The King of France is bald.’ For a discussion on presuppositional ambiguity in negated sentences one might also wish to consult Horn (1997) and Burton-Roberts (1997) and (1999).

¹⁷ Herein ‘¬’ is used as a negation operator.

of the subject referent. Entailments are not cancellable, therefore, the cancellation test should produce pragmatically infelicitous utterances (or at least less felicitous than utterances with a cancellation of the presupposition), and it does so indeed; see the example below:

- (12) a. # [*Manau, galėtume sakyti, kad*
 šalt-is jauči-a-si, [bet juk nėra šalta].
 cold-NOM.SG feel.PRS-3-REFL
 ‘I suppose we could say that the frost is felt, but it’s not
 frosty.’ (infelicitous)

If uttered sincerely, the utterance above makes no sense because saying that the frost is felt when it is not even frosty would be saying something that is not true (i. e., lying), hence, the infelicity of the utterance.

4.2. Subject GEN.NEG: the non-presuppositional nature of a lack of existential commitment and the commitment to non-existence

Since Subject GEN.NEG does not trigger existential commitment, that is sentences with Subject GEN.NEG neither presuppose nor entail the existence of the subject referent (in a given location)—it is used as a non-committing device in interaction. One could argue that there are two possible readings of the sentence in (13a): (1) the girl is present in the picture but she is not visible in it (because, for example, someone taller is standing in front) or (2) the girl is not visible in the picture because she is not present in it.

- (13) a. *Mergait-ės ne-si-mat-o nuotrauk-oje.*
 girl-GEN.SG NEG-REFL-see-PRS.3 picture-LOC.SG
 ‘The girl can’t be seen in the picture.’
 b. The girl is not in the picture.
 c. The speaker does not know for sure if the girl is present in
 the picture.

The first interpretation would also be possible if Subject NOM was used instead; in fact, the first interpretation would be the only possible interpretation of a corresponding negated sentence with the subject marked NOM. Also, note that the meaning of the verb *matytis* in (13a) has undergone ‘semantic bleaching’, i. e., ‘to be visible’ in (13a) equals

‘to exist’ in a given location; and this sentence is an example of an existential sentence of localised existence. These two circumstances suggest that the speaker’s choice to use Subject GEN.NEG in such sentences is guided by the possibility of the second reading (the commitment to non-existence); hence, sentences with Subject GEN.NEG not only lack the commitment to the existence of a subject referent in the specified location (13c) but may also indirectly imply its non-existence in a given location (13b). A lack of existential commitment here means that the speaker may use Subject GEN.NEG in order not to commit herself to existence or non-existence of the subject referent because, for example, she simply may not know if the subject referent is present in the location in question (13c). At this point, it is necessary to investigate the semantic/pragmatic nature of such inferences—are they entailed, presupposed, or implicated?

The case presented in (13) clearly fails the above presented *presupposition test* on FSP-a because neither the truth value of (13b) nor the truth value of (13c) has any effect on the truth value of (13a). If the supposed presupposition (13b) is false and the girl is actually present in the picture, she can nonetheless be not visible in it (because someone is standing in front of her); thus, the entire statement remains true. This is a necessary and sufficient condition to reject the hypothesis of a presupposed or entailed commitment to non-existence triggered by Subject GEN. Similarly, if the supposed presupposition (13c) is false and the speaker does know that a) the girl is present in the picture (the first reading of (13a) is implied), or that b) the girl is not present in the picture (the second reading of (13a) is implied)—the truth value of (13a) remains unchanged either way. Thus, the only hypothesis which remains to be tested is that sentences with Subject GEN.NEG implicate the non-existence of a subject referent and/or the lack of existential commitment and if they do so—what sort of implicature that is.

4.3. Conversational implicatures rising from the use of Subject GEN.NEG

‘An implicature is different from an entailment or a semantic presupposition, in that it is not necessary for the truth of the sentence’ (Bach 1999)—for utterances with Subject GEN.NEG this was proved in the

previous section. Implicatures are further classified into conventional and conversational:

...for an implicature to qualify as conventional, it must depend on the conventional meaning of a particular locution in the sentence. [...] it is different from a conversational implicature, which depends on the fact that what is said is, in the context, not sufficiently plausible, informative, relevant, or otherwise appropriate and whose conveyance requires an inference based on the supposition that the speaker wouldn't have said what he said if he hadn't meant something more than that. (*ibid*)¹⁸

One of the main differing characteristics of the two is that conversational implicatures are *cancellable*¹⁹ without a contradiction and *calculable* through a working-out procedure, whereas conventional implicatures are neither cancellable, similarly to entailments, nor calculable. For the uses of Subject GEN.NEG, the examples in (14–16) in the table below suggest that both (a) the non-existence of the subject referent and (b) the lack of commitment to the (non-)existence of the subject referent, implied by the Subject GEN.NEG, can be cancelled with no contradictions by conjoining the original utterance with the negated implicature. Note that implicatures of (b) type refer to the speaker's knowledge; therefore, it is necessary to give an indirect speech report of the main utterance in order to be able to access the supposed speaker's lack of commitment to the existence of the subject referent through the cancellation.

¹⁸ Note that Bach in this article 'The Myth of Conventional Implicature' actually argues against the concept of conventional implicatures; nonetheless, he provides an informative description of what the phenomenon is usually said to be. For an alternative view on conventional implicatures as a separate 'class of meanings', one might wish to consult Karttunen and Peters (1979) and, more recently, Potts (2005).

¹⁹ Recently, there have been attempts to question the property of cancellability of the conversational implicatures; for discussion of these attempts and arguments against them see Dahlman (2012). Besides direct cancellation, the cancellability of conversational implicatures may also refer to suspension ('the speaker utters lexical content that indicates that she is not committed to the implicature or its negation') and lack of contextual support ('the context is one in which an expected implicature does not arise'), according to Potts (2013, 19–20).

Table 3. Cancellation of the lack of existential commitment and the commitment to non-existence

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| (14) | <p>[Pijus sako, kad] <i>mergait-ės ne-si-mat-o,</i> girl-GEN.SG NEG-REFL-SEE-PRS.3 ‘Pijus says that the girl can’t be seen...’</p> | <p>a) <i>bet kad ji čia yra.</i> but that she is here.’ b) <i>bet jis žino, ar ji čia yra, ar ne.</i> but he knows whether she’s here or not.’</p> |
| (15) | <p>[Pijus sako, kad] <i>šalč(i)-o ne-si-jauč(i)-a,</i> cold-GEN.SG NEG-REFL-feel.PRS-3 ‘Pijus says that the frost isn’t felt ...’</p> | <p>a) <i>bet kad yra šalta.</i> but that it’s cold.’ b) <i>bet jis žino, ar yra šalta, ar ne.</i> but he knows whether it’s cold or not.’</p> |
| (16) | <p>[Pijus sakė, kad] <i>baim-ės ne-si-girdėj-o,</i> fear-GEN.SG NEG-REFL-hear.PST-3 ‘Pijus said that fear wasn’t heard ...’</p> | <p>a) <i>bet kad visi bijojo.</i> but that everyone was afraid.’ b) <i>bet jis žinojo, ar visi bijojo, ar ne.</i> but he knew whether everyone was afraid or not.’</p> |

The well-formedness of the examples above leads us to conclude that the implicatures of both types are likely to be conversational rather than conventional. Moreover, since these implicatures are generated by the use of a specific morphosyntactic construction—Subject GEN.NEG,—they must be generalised conversational implicatures (in Grice’s terms). In the case of generalised conversational implicatures, ‘the use of a certain form of words in an utterance would normally (in the absence of special circumstances) carry such-and-such an implicature or type of implicature’ as opposed to particularised conversational implicatures where ‘an implicature is carried by saying that *p* on a particular occasion in virtue of special features of the context’ (Grice 1975, 56). Grice has also noted that ‘it is all too easy to treat a generalized conversational implicature as if it were a conventional implicature’ (*ibid.*). In the case of Subject GEN.NEG, however, given the cancellability and, as presented below, the calculability of the implicatures in question, it seems uncontroversial to me to claim that

uses of Subject GEN.NEG with verbs of perception generate generalised conversational, and not conventional, implicatures.

The idea behind the *calculability* of conversational implicatures is based on Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP), which requires one to 'make your conversational contribution such as is required and, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged' (Grice 1975, 45), and on nine conversational maxims which fall into four categories: the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner. The following is the pattern of working-out of conversational implicatures, as formulated by Grice himself²⁰:

He has said that *q*; [1] there is no reason to suppose that he is not observing the maxims, or at least the CP; [2] he could not be doing this unless he thought that *p*; [3] he knows (and knows that I know that he knows) that I can see that the supposition that he thinks that *p* IS required; [4] he has done nothing to stop me thinking that *p*; [5] he intends me to think, or is at least willing to allow me to think, that *p*; [6] and so he has implicated that *p*. (Grice 1975, 50)

The implicature of the lack of existential commitment in utterances with Subject GEN.NEG and verbs of perception rises in the cases when one of the two maxims of Quality—'Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence'—clashes with one of the two maxims of Quantity 'Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange)' (Grice 1975, 45–46). In order to fulfil the requirement of quality, the speaker decides to violate the requirement of quantity instead—to make her contribution less informative than required—and instead saying explicitly that something exists, or not, opts for a Subject GEN.NEG with a verb of perception that has potential to be understood as a synonym of an existential *būti* 'to be'.

The implicature of the commitment to non-existence is also related to the maxim of Quantity and has properties of a *quantity implicature*.

²⁰ Grice's suggested way of calculating conversational implicatures has attracted a considerable amount of criticism by his successors whose main argument is that Grice's working-out pattern generates implicatures that are not actually implicated and fails to generate some implicatures which are implicated (cf. Davis 2013, Potts 2013). Nonetheless, Gricean working-out of conversational implicatures remains the most authoritative model to this day.

Quantity implicatures, or Q-implicatures, are often calculated through specific working-out procedures which are often facilitated by two (or more) competing ways of communicating (nearly) the same thing. For example, consider sentence (17) which asserts that no revolution was heard yet.

- (17) *Revoliucij-os dar ne-si-girdėj-o.*
 revolution-GEN.SG yet NEG-REFL-hear.PST.3
 ‘No revolution was heard yet.’

Let us assume for now that (17) implicates that p_1 —‘the speaker does not know whether the revolution was going on yet or not’, and p_2 —‘there was no revolution yet’. To test this assumption, I use a *Standard Recipe for Q-implicatures* proposed by Geurts (2010, 32), slightly modified to include the presupposition of existential commitment. Note that the presentation below is based on an assumption that the speaker may have equally well uttered *Revoliucija:NOM dar nesigirdėjo*, which differs from what was actually uttered just by that NOM presupposes that there was a revolution. Since it is this presupposition that is semantically and pragmatically relevant in making the choice between these two utterances, only this presupposition is inputted into the *Standard Recipe*:

- 1) Rather than saying (17), Speaker could have made a stronger statement: (17*) *Revoliucija:NOM dar nesigirdėjo* which would have presupposed that (17**) there was a revolution at the time. Why did he not do so?
- 2) The most likely explanation is that Speaker does not believe that (17**) is true: $\neg \text{BEL}_s(17^{**})$, i. e., it is not the case that Speaker believes that the revolution was going on at the time.
- 3) Speaker is likely to have an opinion as to whether (17**) is true: $\text{BEL}_s(17^{**}) \vee \text{BEL}_s(\neg(17^{**}))$, i. e., Speaker believes that the revolution was going on at the time or Speaker believes that it is not the case that the revolution was going on at the time.
- 4) Between them, (2) and (3) entail $\text{BEL}_s(\neg(17^*p))$: Speaker believes that it is not the case that the revolution was going on at the time.

The working-out procedure, in fact, has generated both implicatures: p_1 in step (2) and p_2 in step (4). Accordingly, a lack of existential com-

mitment p_1 would be classified as a *weak* conversational Q-implicature and the commitment to non-existence p_2 —as a *strong* conversational Q-implicature (the terms suggested in Geurts 2010, 29–30). Contextual information about whether the speaker has an opinion about the truth of an alternative/competing utterance (in this case, its presupposition) or not is what determines which of the two implicature is actually generated in an interaction.

5. Mapping the scale of existential commitment onto the sentence types

Suppose the speaker is asked whether the town was undergoing a revolution at some specific time in the past; she may proceed by giving the following answers, ranging from the assertion of the existence of the revolution on one end to the assertion of the non-existence of the revolution on the other end:

- (18) a. *Taip, revoliucij-a jau vyk-o.*
 yes revolution-NOM.SG already go.ON-PST.3
 ‘Yes, the revolution was already going on.’
- b. *Revoliucij-a jau vyko, tik miest-e ne-si-girdėj-o.*
 revoliution-NOM.SG already go.ON-PST.3 only
 TOWN-LOC.SG NEG-REFL-hear.PST.3
 ‘The revolution (has already been going on, just it) wasn’t audible in the town.’
- c. *Revoliucij-os miest-e ne-si-girdėj-o —*
 revoliution-GEN.SG TOWN-LOC.SG NEG-REFL-hear-PST.3
neaišku, ar iš viso jau buvo prasidėjusi.
 ‘The revolution wasn’t heard in the town—it’s not clear whether it had started at all by then.’
- d. *Miest-e ne-si-girdėj-o (jokios)*
 TOWN-LOC.SG NEG-REFL-hear.PST.3 (NO-GEN.SG.F)
revoliucij-os.
 revolution-GEN.SG
 ‘There was no revolution heard in the town.’

- e. *Ne, revoliucij-a (tuo metu) ne-vyk-o.*
 NEG revolution-NOM.SG (then) NEG-go.ON-PST.3
 ‘No, there was no revolution going on at the time.’

The main concern of this paper was focused on the subject case marking in such negated sentences with the verbs of perception as given in (18b–d). The gradual scale of (non-)existential commitment and its properties in such sentences can be summarised in the following table:

Table 4. The scale of existential commitment mapped onto the subject case marking and the sentence type

| Subject case marking | NOM | GEN | GEN |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Existential commitment | $BEL_s(\text{exists}(x))$ | $\neg BEL_s(\text{exists}(x))$ | $BEL_s(\neg \text{exists}(x))$ |
| Nature of commitment | Presupposition | Weak implicature | Strong implicature |
| Sentence type | Locative sentences | Localised existence* | Existential sentences* |

In negated intransitive sentences with the verbs of perception, when the Subject is marked NOM, the existential commitment to the subject referent is presupposed, that is the speaker believes that the subject referent exists in the location in question. Such description is characteristic of locative sentences. The use of Subject GEN.NEG in negated intransitive sentences with the verbs of perception gives rise to two kinds of generalised conversational Q-implicatures: (1) a weak implicature of the lack of the speaker’s commitment to the existence of the subject referent in the location, meaning that it is not the case that the speaker believes that the (identifiable) subject referent exists in that location, and (2) a strong implicature of the commitment to the non-existence of the subject referent in the location or in the world itself, meaning that the speaker believes that it is not the case that there exists a (identifiable) subject referent. Intuitively, I am inclined

to believe that the first scenario is linked to existential sentences of localised existence and the second one—to conventional existential sentences. This would be in line with the reasoning behind the information structure that the content of the theme is generally suggested to have a (previously identified) referent, i. e. the thing (and the location) in the first case and the location in the second case (cf. *Table 2*). The examples (18c) and (18d) support such intuitions. However, strictly speaking, they are not sufficient to provide conclusive evidence in favour of such patterning and more work remains to be done in this direction.

6. Concluding remarks

This paper was intended to shine some light on what determines the speaker's choice between the Nominative and the Genitive cases in negated intransitive sentences in Lithuanian. It was shown that subjects marked *NOM* are committed to exist, whereas subjects marked *GEN* carry no such commitment. In fact, as it was proposed, *GEN* in negated intransitive sentences implicates a lack of existential commitment or, depending on the available contextual information, the non-existence of a subject referent. The test of cancellability and the Standard Recipe for Q-implicatures were used to show that these implicatures are cancellable, calculable and display the properties of generalised scalar conversational implicatures. A proposal of mapping the scale of existential commitment onto the sentence types—locative sentences, conventional existential sentences and sentences of localised existence—was laid out. The Subject *NOM*—*GEN* alternation in Lithuanian proved to be a complex phenomenon on which more research remains to be done. Future research in this direction might include experimental research to see how hearers interpret and perceive the semantic effects of Subject *NOM*—*GEN* alternations, especially in less clear cases with sentences of localised existence. It is worth mentioning that gathering examples proved to be difficult because, as it appears, Subject *NOM* in negated intransitive sentences is quite rare. This may indicate that Subject *GEN.NEG*, similarly to Object *GEN.NEG*, is getting generalised, at least in written discourse. In order to prove or deny this, more studies on its actual use, especially in spontaneous speech,

are needed. In addition, it would be interesting to observe with what intransitive verbs, besides the existential *būti* ‘to be’, Subject GEN.NEG tends to occur; for this matter it is worthwhile to examine more closely the class of verbs of emergence such as *(ne)atvykti* ‘to arrive’, *(ne)ateiti* ‘to arrive/come’, or *(ne)atsirasti* ‘to appear’.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN GLOSSING

1 — first person, 3 — third person, ACC — accusative, ADV — adverb, COP — copular *būti*, DAT — dative, DIM — diminutive, F — feminine, GEN — genitive, IMP — imperative, INF — infinitive, INS — instrumental, LOC — locative, M — masculine, NEG — negative, NOM — nominative, PFV — perfective, PL — plural, PPP — past passive participle, PPRA — present active participle, PRS — present, PST — past, PTC — particle, REFL — reflexive, SG — singular, SBJV — subjunctive

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