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

HÉLÈNE DE PENANROS
Inalco & CNRS Laboratoire de Linguistique Formelle, Université Paris-Diderot

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 \textit{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)

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):

\[
(2) \text{vakar-op} \quad ( = \text{vakar-o} + \text{-p}) \\
\text{evening-ALL.SG} \quad (\text{evening-GEN.SG} + \text{POST})
\]

‘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 (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 utterance¹.

Semantics of the instrumental case²:
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

¹ For a justification of this position, see de Penanros (2013b) in the present volume, pp. 135–136.
² 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]_{x} [bad]_{y} -u_{y}

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]_{x} nuo_{y} [bado]_{y}

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: \([\text{subj}]_x \text{mirti} \text{iš}_y [\text{bado}]_y\).

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 \([\text{mirti badu}]\) 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 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, 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 Kompiuterinės Lingvistikos Centras (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.

---

3 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.

4 It is to be noted that we encountered the same practical difficulty in this study as in de Penanros 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, 
tegul 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 informants⁵ 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 γ

The semantics of the instrumental which provides the process with qualitative properties to define its nature explains which nouns may be employed in position γ⁶.

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

(6) mirti badu_ins.sg, plaučių vėžiu_ins.sg, gripu_ins.sg / *meile_ins.sg*
*džiaugmu_ins.sg* *skausmu_ins.sg*

---

⁵ They generally specify afterwards that the preposition iš is also possible in such an instance.

⁶ 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 (y) 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’. 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

Thirdly, the names of internal sensations are not possible in position y:

(8) mirti *alkiu, *troškuliu, *nuovargiu

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

• 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)
• alkiš 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.

---

7 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 siauronoms 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 (tuo metu ‘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\(^8\) 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

\(^8\) ‘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 įš 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 auk-s, skaisč-į skaus-m, vis-s
     shine-INF gold-INS.sg pure-INS.sg red-INS.sg all-INS.sg
     gražum-s, 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 įš: the process as a manifestation of ʏ
2.2.1. Contexts of expression of a feeling

If įš 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 įš is preferably employed in contexts like (11), which corresponds to the usual expression you utter when you are very hungry:

(11) Miršt-u įš bad-o! /?bad-u!
    die.PRS-1SG įš 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 įš

The semantics of įš 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 ʏ: įš exclusively combines with nouns referring to emotions, sensations, psychological traits of the subject. To put it another way, įš 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 ʏ, i.e. ‘ABSTRACT / INTERNAL’, are captured by the semantic definition of įš:
(i) The formulation “iš posits that ʏ has a double status: ʏ as the notion as such (ɪ)” captures the fact that the term in position ʏ exclusively refers to abstract notions. For this reason, terms particularizing ʏ (noun adjuncts, possessives, etc.) are excluded from the prepositional phrase (see (12)).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(12) } & \text{iš } \text{tinginystės } / \text{*iš } \text{savos } \text{tinginystės} \\
& \text{iš laziness } / \text{*iš refl.poss laziness} \\
& \text{‘because of laziness, *because of his/her laziness’}
\end{align*}
\]

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

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(13) } & \text{iš didelio džiaugsmo, iš neišpasakyto skausmo} \\
& \text{iš big joy iš unspeakable pain} \\
& \text{‘for great joy, with unspeakable pain’}
\end{align*}
\]

(ii) The formulation “x is initially located by ɪ of ʏ (ʏ as such)” shows the necessary cohesion between x (the subject) and ʏ (the feeling, emotion or psychological trait); ʏ 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)).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{(14) } & \text{Jonas apsvaigęs nuo/*iš jį} \\
& \text{Jonas intoxicated nuo/*iš 3.ACC.SG} \\
& \text{užplūd-us-io džiaugsm-o.} \\
& \text{invade-gerp-GEN.SG joy-GEN.SG} \\
& \text{‘Jonas is wild with the joy that has invaded him."} \\
\text{(15) } & \text{Pievė geltonuoja} \\
& \text{purien-omis */iš purien-ų /nuo purien-ų} \\
& \text{buttercup-INS.PL */iš buttercup-GEN.PL /nuo buttercup-GEN.PL}
\end{align*}
\]

\[9\] See Valiulytė (1998, 341) for this point.

\[10\] 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 alkiš (hunger sensation) in position y:

(16) mirti  iš  alkiš
   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-ų   vėž-ų,  grip-u  /
die  lung-GEN.PL  cancer-INS.SG  flu-INS.SG
*iš  plauč-ų   vėž-įo   *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 (y) 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 y 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 y and vice versa. Example (18) displays the type of predicates possible in position x if we have ‘baimė’ (fear) in position y, and, conversely, (19) presents the list of nouns possible in position y if we have the process ‘(pa)šokti’ (to jump) in position x.
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\(^{12}\) 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 \(γ\) 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

\(^{11}\) Note that the verb *išblaivėti* (‘to sober’) is perfectly possible with the cause *baimė* (fear) if it is introduced by the preposition *nuo*:

\(\text{(18') } \text{I parytį } \text{nuo } /\text{*iš baim-ės } \text{išblaivėję-ęs vežėjas} \)\n
towards.morning *nuo* /\*iš fear-GEN.SG sober-PRA carter

*rado mirusįjį upėje, atvežė valsčiun ir iki pustiaudienio laukė, kol atsibus naminęs 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.’

\(^{12}\) 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 nūo. While one can understand that the respective semantics of the instrumental and of the preposition įš allow these markers to express the causal relations between emotions, feelings, internal sensations and the involuntary reactions of their author, 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, whereas the preposition įš dominates where the subject refers to humans. This may be explained by the fact that for the preposition įš, it is important that x referred to the author of y (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’ 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 įš (see 20):

\[
\begin{align*}
(20) \ & X \ iš \ nēvilt-iės, \ iš \ susijaudinim-o, \\
\ & X \ iš \ ķīpšums-iės \ iš \ nervozmis-iės \\
\ & iš \ vilt-iės, \ *iš \ ramyb-ės \\
\ & *iš \ ķīpšums-iės \ *iš \ ramyb-ės \\
\ & *iš \ ķīpšums-iės \ *iš \ ramyb-ės \\
\ & ‘X of despair, of nervousness, *of hope, *of serenity’
\end{align*}
\]

13 Indeed considering that in švietėti įš laimės ‘to glow from happiness’, glowing is a manifestation of happiness is not very different, from an interpretative point of view, from švietėti laimė, ‘to glow with happiness’, where glowing is presented as qualitatively defined by happiness.


15 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’)).


   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 *growing* 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 pašaipa. /*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 baime/*baime, *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:


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 mirė nuo bado ar šaltio,
soldiers die-pst.3 nuo hunger-gen.sg or cold-gen.sg
bus tiriama, 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 γ as an independent, autonomous and objective cause of death explains:

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

(27) Kaime viešpatavo badas.
Nuо /*Iš jo /*Juo ir mirė
nuо /*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 nuо/*iš vėžio, apendicito, širdies ligos
(‘to die of cancer, appendicitis, heart disease’)  

• Nouns of external agent:
mirti nuо/*iš perdozuotų narkotikų, peilio dūrio, dvylikos tūkstančių lazdyų smūgų, 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’)

(iii) that *nuo* is difficult with terms referring to internal sensations:
mirti nuo/iš troškulio, bado, algio, šalčio, karščio
(‘to die of thirst, hunger, 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.

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 γ being in this case understood as ‘natural phenomena’, i. e., elements independent of the subject (see for instance *Vanduo nuo šalčio sustingo*).

---

16 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 pasitenkinės paskaitos aplaidumuo įrodyti. Tuo tarpu administracinių ir civilinių teismų, kuris neegzistuoja anglosaksonų teisinėse sistemose dar vieną negerovę.*

17 Cf. the difference between *alkis* (hunger₁) and *badas* (hunger₂) above.
i 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 ʏ.

2.3.2. ʏ 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)):

    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):
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.

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)).

‘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 *y*. 
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 kahn-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.yellowprs.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\(^{18}\). 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\(^{19}\).

\(^{18}\) For an analysis of this type, see de Penanros (2004).

\(^{19}\) See de Penanros 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.20

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.

Hélène de Penanros
Inalco
65, Rue des Grands Moulins, F-75013 Paris
helene.depenanros@inalco.fr

ABBREVIATIONS


BIBLIOGRAPHY

ASHBURY, ANNA, BERIT GEHRKE & VERONIKA HEGEDŰS. 2006. One size fits all: prefixes, particles, adpositions and cases as members

20 See de Penanros 2013a for an analysis of this question.


**Blake, Barry J. 1994.** *Case*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.


