AUDRONĖ ŠOLIENĖ
Faculty of Philology, Department of English Philology
Vilnius University, Lithuania
ORCID: 0000-0002-7768-5998
audrone.soliene@flf.vu.lt

LITHUANIAN INTERROGATIVE PARTICLES AS TAGS IN FICTION AND SPOKEN REGISTERS: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

The present paper deals with the semantic class of the interrogative particles in Lithuanian *ar ne*, *ane*, *ar taip*, *ar ką*, *gal ne*, which, when placed utterance finally, form tag questions and perform different pragmatic functions. They can also occur as stand-alone particles or be intertwined in longer discourse passages. The study examines the frequency, positional distribution, and scope of the particles in question in fiction and spoken registers. It will disclose the semantic-pragmatic properties and multifunctionality of the particles by looking into the correlation between their core meaning and occurrence in different speech acts. The present research is corpus-based. The data for the study are retrieved from the sub-corpus of fiction of the Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language and the Corpus of Spoken Lithuanian. The study combines both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. The preliminary results show that, though the particles under study are multifunctional and perform various textual as well as interpersonal functions, their predominant use is in the latter domain, i.e., they tend more frequently to feature in the interpersonal environment serving as (inter)subjective means of involving the interlocutor into the situation discussed, eliciting his/her response or appealing to the common ground.

Keywords: interrogative particle(s), tag question(s), textual function, interpersonal function, Lithuanian

1. Introduction

Particles in European languages have been analysed from different perspectives: their multifunctionality, position in sentences and discourse, correlation with the informative structure, and right/left peripheries of the sentence/

utterance (König 1991; Fischer 2000; Aijmer 2002; König and Siemund 2007; Haselow 2012; Grosz 2016; Bayer and Struckmeier 2017). In Lithuanian, there exist some studies dealing with the analysis of individual particles (Petit 2010; Sawicki 2012; Šolienė 2015; Jasionytė-Mikučionienė 2019; Panov 2019; Ruskan 2019); however, a more systematic analysis encompassing different semantic classes of particles seems to have been overlooked.

Particles in the comprehensive grammar of Lithuanian are defined as a class of uninflected words "which serve to give modal or emotional emphasis to other words, or word groups, or clauses. Particles are unchangeable words and they have no particular syntactic function in a sentence" (Ambrazas 2006: 393). Structurally, particles can be simple (e.g., *ar* 'or', *ką* 'what', *gal* 'maybe'), compound (e.g., *bene* 'is it/really', *argi* 'really', *negi* 'really', *kažin* 'hardly') and complex (*e.g., ar ne* 'isn't it', *ar ką* 'or what', *ar taip* 'or so', *gal ne* 'maybe not'. Some complex particles are semantically indivisible (e.g., *vos tik* 'hardly'); however, most of them are "free combinations of simple particles retaining their own meaning" (Ibid. 396). Different semantic classes of particles are singled out: specifying and limiting, demonstrative, negative, affirmative, interrogative and dubitative, comparative, optative, intensifying-emphatic, and connecting (Ibid. 397). The present paper deals with the semantic class of the complex interrogative particles in Lithuanian *ar ne* 'or not', *ane*[1] 'or not', *ar taip* 'or yes', *ar ką* 'or what', *gal ne* 'perhaps not'[2], which, added utterance finally, may form tag/disjunctive questions and perform different pragmatic functions: confirmation seeking, annoyance, mirativity, etc.:

(1) *Tau reikia pinigų, **taip** / **ar ne**?*[3]
     'You need money, **yes**? / **don't you**?'

(2) *Bet tau jis visai nepatinka, **ar ne**?*
     'But you don't like him at all, **do you**?' (Ambrazas 2006: 714)

They can also occur as stand-alone particles or be intertwined in longer discourse passages.

The use of the Lithuanian interrogative particles in question seems to correspond to tag questions in English, which have received much scholarly attention (Tottie and Hoffmann 2006; Axelsson 2011; Kimps et al. 2014; Kimps 2018; Martínez Caro 2020, to name a few). Though there is some variation in terminology regarding tag questions and the elements they consist of, there

---

[1] *Ane* is a truncated form of *ar ne*. It is not attested in grammars or dictionaries.
[2] These are literal glosses; their exact equivalents may be different depending on the context of use.
[3] Diacritical marks indicating tonal accent and stress are not indicated as the empirical data is drawn from corpora and grammar books that do not provide markings for intonation.

seems to be a consensus on what tag questions are. Tottie and Hoffmann (2006: 283) state that 'canonical' tag questions are comprised "of two clauses, an *anchor* and a *tag*". Kimps (2018: 51) maintains that "[v]ariable English tag questions consist of an anchor followed by an interrogative tag with the finite verb and subject of the tag typically agreeing with those of the anchor. The default position of the interrogative tag is sentence or clause-final. Still, it may also occur in the middle position, as in "You don't, do you, believe he is coming" (Ibid. 52). Though the final position of Lithuanian particles forming tags in a sentence or clause seems to be definitional, as "the speaker is requesting confirmation/agreement on the point of the propositional content immediately preceding the tag" (Biscetti (2006: 225), it should also be noted that other syntactic positions are possible. "While the different positions of the tag mark different elements as focal, this does not appear to affect the speech function and stance of the entire TQ [tag question] construction" (Kimps 2018: 52). In Lithuanian, there is no agreement between an anchor and its tag. The investigated interrogative particles are not the only means available in the language to form question tags. Tags can be formed by such words or even clauses as *tiesa?* 'is it true?', *teisybė?* 'truth?', *gerai?* 'ok?', *kaip manai?* 'what do you think?', *ar ne tiesa?* 'isn't it true?'; however, the present paper focuses only on the complex tag question-forming interrogative particles.

The functional analysis of tag questions in English has also been approached from different angles; different (or overlapping) taxonomies have been proposed. For example, a few authors single out two major domains of English tag questions – epistemic and affective, which are further sub-divided into different sub-categories such as informational, confirmatory, facilitating, peremptory, aggressive, etc. (see Algeo 1990; Holmes 1995; Tottie and Hoffmann 2006, *inter alia*). More recent studies further refined these semantic-pragmatic classifications by considering the functions of English tags in speech acts constituting genuine questions, statements expecting no response, statement-question blends, responses, desired actions, etc. (Kimps et al. 2014; Kimps 2018). The functional analysis of the present paper draws a line between interpersonal and textual use of the particles under study in spoken discourse and fiction (cf. Brinton 1996: 35-40). The interpersonal domain includes expressions "of the speaker's attitudes, evaluations, judgments, expectations, and demands, as well as of the nature of the social exchange, the role of the speaker and the role assigned to the hearer" (Brinton 1996: 38). Particles performing textual functions help the speaker to structure "meaning as text, creating cohesive passages of discourse; it is "language as relevance", using language in a way that is relevant to context" (Ibid. 38).

Tag questions have been investigated in other languages, too. Morin (1973: 98) demonstrated that the French particles *si*, *oui* 'yes', and *non* 'no' are used to form French tag questions resembling English tag question formation rules.

Wierzbicka (2003: 38) drew attention to the differences between English and Polish by stating that English has a huge variety of question tags, which results in frequency differences between the two languages, as Polish has only six words serving this purpose: "*prawda?* 'true?', *nie?* 'no?', *tak?* 'yes?', *co?* 'what?', *dobrze?* 'good?', and *nieprawdaż?* 'not true?'". However, it appears that a greater number of analogous constructions can be identified in Polish, as evidenced by the item *czyż nie?* 'isn't it". Tomaselli and Gatt (2015: 80) examined the use and functions of Italian tag questions, discovering that these forms were more commonly employed by individuals with a "higher conversational status". These individuals tended to use tag questions to adhere to rules of social conduct and maintain politeness. Buysse's (2017) research of English tag questions and their translations into Dutch demonstrated that as the Dutch language system lacks a clearly defined category of tag questions, it is unclear what expressions in Dutch should be used to perform the corresponding functions of English tag questions (Buysse (2017: 159). The study provided a list of items that may be considered equivalents of tag questions in Dutch; the most common translations of English tag questions were the interjection *hè* 'eh' and the modal particle *toch* 'rather/ actually' (Ibid. 162-77).

The use of the interrogative particles as tag questions received little attention in descriptive Lithuanian grammars. The possibility of the interrogative particles appearing in such constructions is accounted for by several sentences only, without further elaborating their pragmatic potential. In her "Functional Grammar of Lithuanian", Valeckienė (1998) provides a two-sentence long introduction to tags in Lithuanian. Under the category of interrogative particles (cf. 'interrogative tags' in Biber et al. (1999: 139)), *(ar) ne, (ar) taip, (ar) ką, gal ne* are listed as items that appear in the final position in a question and are used to strengthen the question and elicit a confirmation on the part of the addressee (Valeckienė 1998: 192). The other comprehensive grammar of Lithuanian that explicitly uses the terms 'tag' and 'disjunctive question' is "Lithuanian Grammar" (2006): "[t]he addressee is urged to respond <...> by the tags *taip, ar ne, (ar) ką*, which makes them disjunctive questions" (Ambrazas 2006: 714). Other Lithuanian grammars focus on a broader functional division of interrogative sentences in Lithuanian and give no entries specifically dedicated to tag questions. Traditionally, interrogative sentences in Lithuanian are "subcategorized into general (verifying) and special (particularizing) depending on the nature of the information the speaker seeks to obtain" (Ibid. 712), which corresponds to *yes-no* questions and *wh*-questions (see also Balkevičius 1963; Labutis 1994).

None of the research papers that mention tag questions in the Lithuanian language had them as their primary focus. In a broader study of Lithuanian questions by Balčiūnienė and Simonavičienė (2009), only the questions that have particles attached at the end of an utterance were considered as equivalents of English tag questions, and they formed a small part of their dataset (45 cases out

of 578). A later study by Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė and Balčiūnienė (2016) on the functions of various Lithuanian interrogative sentence types in the annotated *Corpus of Spoken Lithuanian* only highlights the low frequency of tags. Among the questions containing the interrogative particle, "the tag questions seem to be less frequent (45 occurrences) than the questions containing the interrogative particle at the beginning of the sentence (84 occurrences)" (Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė and Balčiūnienė 2016: 98). Kalėdaitė and Bastienė (2012: 209, 219) investigated negation strategies in Lithuanian and English in the English novel "Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Brontë and its translation into Lithuanian. They found 17 instances of tag questions which, according to them, were translated using different translation strategies because "tag questions do not have a straightforward corresponding linguistic item in Lithuanian" (Ibid. 219). Panov (2019) in his paper on the Lithuanian particles *juk* and *gi* states that "both *gi* and *juk* occur in questions equivalent with tag questions in English when the expected response is positive" (2019: 76), while only *gi* can appear in tag questions when expecting a negative response (Ibid. 77). Though the mentioned studies indicate the existence of equivalents of tag questions in Lithuanian, a more thorough analysis of the functional potential of interrogative particles functioning as English tag question equivalents seems to have escaped linguists' attention.

The present study sets out to examine the frequency, positional distribution, and scope of the interrogative particles *ar ne*, *ane*, *ar taip*, *ar ką*, and *gal ne* in fiction and spoken registers, in which particle use is ubiquitous. It will disclose the semantic-pragmatic properties and multifunctionality of the particles by looking into the correlation between their core meaning and their role in expressing (inter) subjective and (inter)personal meanings and structuring the ongoing discourse.

The outline of the paper is as follows. Section 2 presents the data and methodology as well as data selection criteria. Section 3 deals with the quantitative and qualitative findings of the analysis. The main results are summarized in Section 4.

2. Data and methods

The present research is corpus-based. The data for the study are retrieved from the *Corpus of Spoken Lithuanian* (CSL), compiled at Vytautas Magnus University, which contains more than 320,000 words.[4] The corpus represents different varieties of spoken language (spontaneous vs. prepared, private vs. public) and various genres (monologue, dialogue, polylogue); it also provides metadata for a conversation place and speaker demographic details. The second

---

[4] This is the size of the corpus provided on its official website. The actual search yielded 297,798 words in total, so the normalised frequencies are counted taking into account this total.

data source is the sub-corpus of fiction of the *Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language* (CCLL); the size of the sub-corpus is 18,461,597 words. The fiction register was chosen because fiction embodies a wide spectrum of linguistic output and style, including features of spoken discourse, with which discourse particle use is generally associated (Biber et al. 1999: 869). Since the corpora are of different sizes, the raw frequency numbers have been normalized per 100,000 words. Moreover, the log-likelihood (LL) test, commonly considered a more statistically reliable tool than the chi-square test (cf. Dunning 1993), was performed to verify whether the similarities and differences in frequency are statistically significant. The higher the LL test value, the more significant the difference between the two frequency scores becomes. A frequency difference is considered statistically significant if the LL test value is 3.84 or higher at the level of $p < 0.05$.

It must be noted that only the *Corpus of Spoken Lithuanian* is part-of-speech annotated; however, it does not allow part-of-speech filtering, so the initial search included all possible instances of the forms under study. The corpus output files in the plain text format were imported into an Excel spreadsheet for further manual analysis. Table 1 presents the raw frequencies of all the forms extracted initially from both corpora.

Table 1. The initial dataset of automatic search

Form	Spoken register (raw fr)	Fiction (raw fr)
ane	408	28
ar ne	295	3,363
ar ką	23	148
ar taip	17	1,321
gal ne	21	340
TOTAL	764	5,200

The next step in the analysis was to manually discard all the irrelevant examples from the concordances obtained where the forms clearly served other purposes in communication. Such cases where *ar* functioned as a conjunction introducing an alternative and *ne* indicated negation were sifted out, for example:

(3) *Man teks apsispręsti, ką daryti toliau: keliauti drauge su juo **ar ne***.

'I'll have to decide what to do next: to travel together with him **or not**.'(CCLL)[5]

---

[5] All the translations of the examples are provided by the author of the paper.

Other discarded cases included *ar ką* used in the construction *noun + ar ką (nors)*, as in (4), or instances where *ar taip* featured in the construction *ar taip, ar kitaip*, as in (5):

(4) *Paprašysiu Žanetę* **ar ką nors** *iš teniso stovyklos paskolinti man mobilųjį telefoną.*
    'I'll ask Žanetė **or somebody else** from the tennis camp to lend me a phone.'
    (CCLL)

(5) *Tai sušlapsi* **ar taip, ar kitaip**.
    'So, you'll get wet **either way**.' (CCLL)

In the fiction sub-corpus of CCLL, the form *ane* appeared to be homonymous with the proper name *Anė* in the instrumental or vocative case. Obviously, all such instances were eliminated, e.g.:

(6) *Rodžeris su* **Ane** *tylėdami stebėjo, kaip Felicitė geria vandenį.*
    'Roger and **Anė** were silently watching how Felicitė was drinking water.'
    (CCLL)

The normalised frequencies of the relevant items under study are given in Table 2 in sub-section 3.1.

The dataset, which had already been filtered, was randomized for functional analysis. The randomization procedure was performed using the RAND function available in the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet – each occurrence of the node in question was assigned a random number from 0 to 1. Then, the numbers were ranked from the lowest to the highest, and the first 100 hits were selected for the analysis of *ane* and *ar ne*. All the relevant concordance lines of *ar taip*, *ar ką*, and *gal ne* were further analysed regarding their function.

3. Findings

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings of the analysis. It starts with the analysis of the quantitative distribution of *ar ne*, *ane*, *ar taip*, *ar ką*, and *gal ne* (sub-section 3.1). The subsequent sub-section (3.2) further elaborates on qualitative findings with a particular focus on the pragmatic functions of the interrogative particles under study in discourse.

3.1. Quantitative distribution

The first step in the analysis was to look at the frequencies and distribution of the Lithuanian interrogative particles in question in fiction and spoken registers. Table 2 presents the quantitative findings in CCLL (the fiction sub-corpus) and CSL.

Table 2. Frequencies of *ar ne*, *ane*, *ar taip*, *ar ką*, and *gal ne* in CCLL and CSL (the filtered dataset)

Particle	Spoken (CSL)		Fiction (CCLL)	
	Raw fr	fr/100,000	Raw fr	fr/100,000
ane	408	137	2	0.01
ar ne	292	98.1	2,407	13.03
ar ką	27	2.35	17	0.09
ar taip	2	0.67	0	0
gal ne	0	0	19	0.1
TOTAL	709	238.08	2,445	13.24

The quantitative results show that *ane* is strikingly frequent in spoken Lithuanian – fr = 137 (fr per 100,000 words), in contrast to only 0.01 in fiction. Example (7) is a piece of informal conversation between two sisters:

(7) A: *Tėtis sakė, picos nevalgys, tai, jaučiu, vienos mums užteks, **ane***?
    'Daddy said he's not going to eat pizza, so I think one will do for us, **won't it**?'
    B: *Užteks vienos, jo.*
    'One will do, yes.' (CSL)

The reason for an extremely low frequency of *ane* in fiction must be that *ane* is considered an exclusive feature of spoken Lithuanian; it is perceived as substandard in Lithuanian and fiction texts are usually edited. In fiction, *ane* seems to be substituted by *ar ne*, which is the most frequent tag question forming particle in this register (fr = 13.03); however, the log-likelihood score of +646.61 indicates an overwhelming overuse of *ar ne* in spoken Lithuanian, let alone *ane*, whose LL score is +3355.5.

The particles *ar ką, ar taip,* and *gal ne* are extremely rare in both registers and seem to be only minor and subsidiary means of tag question formation in Lithuanian; they still retain their core meanings and are not prone to form tag questions or show features of lexicalisation. The following example illustrates a casual conversation in a hairdresser's shop:

(8) A: *labą_dieną.*
    'good afternoon'
    B: *ar jie geriau už mus, **ar ką***?
    'so they are better than us, **aren't they**?'
    A: *xxx atsiprašau.*
    'xxx I'm sorry.' (CSL)

The quantitative results show that the interrogative particles under study are less frequently used in fiction; the LL score 2591.48 shows that their use in the spoken register is statistically significant, which is not surprising as pragmatic markers, in general, are a ubiquitous feature of oral discourse (Brinton 2017: 3-4). In the same vein, Haselow (2012: 183) states that "the use of English final particles increases with decreasing formality of the speech situation" and with the production of unplanned speech.

3.2. Functional profile of the interrogative particles

The interrogative particles scrutinised here have revealed a wide range of textual and interpersonal functions (Brinton 1996, 2008, 2017). They usually show an (inter)subjective relationship between the speaker and interlocutor(s) or may function as discourse structuring devices: fillers, topic shifters, etc. It must be noted that those two functional domains seem to be unifying for all the discourse particles studied in both registers, the major difference being in their quantitative use.

3.2.1. Functions in the interpersonal domain

The predominant function in the interpersonal domain was that of confirmation seeking. The speaker seeks the listener's confirmation, approval, or involvement in the situation. This is a function discussed in Algeo (1990), Tottie and Hoffmann (2006), and Martínez Caro (2020), among others. Algeo (1990: 445) defines the meaning of this function as "not to seek information but to draw the person addressed into the conversation to evoke agreement <…> ask for confirmation", for example:

(9) A: *dvi kriauklės.*
'two sinks'
B: *kokį kiaušą išsivirt(i), išsikept(i), kokių makaronų.*
'you can boil an egg, or bake it, or make some pasta.'
C: *nu, žodžiu, gyventi galima,* **ar ne***?*
'well, in a word, it's possible to live, **isn't it**?'
A: *jo, įmanoma.*
'yes, absolutely.' (CSL)

In this short episode, the interlocutors discuss the living conditions in a student dormitory. Speaker C's comment, "It is possible to live, isn't it?" is not a genuine information-seeking question. She is not asking about the real possibility of survival; she marks her question epistemically, makes a tentative guess, and expects a positive answer, which she gets – no full stop (see Kimps et al. (2014) and Kimps (2018) for their discussion of statements-question blends).

In many cases, the listener explicitly expresses his or her agreement, but they may choose to contradict, as in (10):

(10) A: *o tas bendrabutis penkiaaukštis?*
    'is that dormitory a five-story building?'
    B: *jo, nu, mes vidury taip gyvenam, tai mum viskas arti į tą ar į tą pusę.*
    'yes, well, we live like in the middle, so it's all close to us, either up or down.'
    C: *Martynai, ateik picos.*
    'Martynai, come over for the pizza.'
    A: *jaučiu, ant aukšto vienas tualetas ir dušai, **ane**?*
    'I feel there is one toilet and shower on each floor, **isn't there**?'
    B: ***ne**.*
    '**no**.'
    A: *ar daugiau?*
    'or more?'
    B: *yra keturi tualetai, dušai visi rūsy.*
    'there are four toilets on each floor; all the showers are in the basement.' (CSL)

As the example above shows, the speaker does not know how the listener will answer the question – positively or negatively. Still, it is also not a mere confirmation-seeking act. Actually, she is asking for information about the facilities in the dormitory. Such uses of English tags have been assigned the role of 'epistemic markers' (Mithun 2012), indicating the different degrees of commitment to the truth of the proposition on the part of the speaker, 'informational tags' (Algeo 1990), or 'epistemic modal tags' (Holmes 1995). Martínez Caro (2020: 223) claims that such tags "can be seen as a hedge or mitigating device of the speaker's own face", so if the addressee chooses not to confirm the truth of the proposition, "the speaker's face will still be largely preserved" (Ibid.):

(11) A: *Budėtoja bjauri.*
    'The dormitory warden is disgusting.'
    B: *O iki kelių ten, nuo iki kelių valandų įleidžia?*
    'And what are the hours, what is the time one can come up for a visit?'
    A: *įleidžia iki...*
    'admits until...'
    B: *iki dešim gal, **ane**?*
    'until ten maybe, **yes**?'
    A: *N**e**. Nu, dabar pradžioj tai sako sako, nu, kad iki dvylikos grįžtume, tai jau būtų labai gerai.*
    '**No**. Well, now at the beginning she says says, well, to be back by twelve, that would already be great.' (CSL)

In this example, the particle *ane* functions as a face-saving device, softening the utterance's illocutionary force.

As the data show, due to their inherently dialogic nature, almost all instances of the Lithuanian particles used in utterance final position and forming disjunctive questions were answered by interlocutors. Answered cases comprise 89 %, and only 11 % of the examples were left unanswered in the discourse. The findings align with the results presented by Martínez Caro (2020: 225). Her study of English tags demonstrated that only 13.48 % of the tags from her data sample remain unanswered. Kimps's (2018: 69) study of English tags in conversation also presents similar results: 70 % of the questions received an explicit answer. The elicited responses usually are explicit verbal answers: *taip* 'yes', *aišku* 'clearly', *žinoma* 'of course', *ne* 'no', etc.:

(12) – *Taigi jūs su Zigmu pavasarį čia tyrėt padegimus, **ar ne***?
'So you and Zigmas investigated the cases of arson here in the spring, **didn't you**?'
– ***Tikrai***, – *sutiko ir Romas*. – *Bandėm tirti*, – *mįslingai šyptelėjo*.
'"**Of course**", Romas agreed. "We tried to investigate," he smiled enigmatically.' (CCLL)

In this instance, the speaker anticipates disagreement or expects the addressee to contradict the statement; however, the addressee does not express their objection verbally.

The addressee's agreement is often directly expressed by other means, for instance, by various interjections such as *mmm, mh, hm*, etc., which indicate an invitation to continue talking or show acknowledgment as in (13):

(13) A: *ją reikia išsitraukti iš, žodžiu, eee rankinės **ar ne***?
'it needs to be taken out of, eh, the handbag, **doesn't it**?'
B: ***mh***.
A: *tada reikia susinchronizuot ją kartu su mobiliuoju telefonu*.
'then you need to synchronize it with the mobile phone.'
B: ***mh***. (CSL)

In this example, the speaker explicitly asks for the addressee's confirmation and agreement. He is checking the order of actions to be performed, which is acknowledged by the addressee's response *mh*. The meaning of the particle *ar ne* here could be paraphrased as "I might know it, but I want to double check".

Very rarely does the addressee choose not to respond to the information provided. This usually happens when the speaker provides information to the interlocutor(s) in an assertive way as a statement or a fact that all participants in the conversation are aware of. As Kimps et al. (2014: 77) claim, "[t]he co-participants may in some cases have the same information, but this is not relevant to the speaker, who does not expect a response". A relevant example is (14):

(14) A: *ai ta tokia.*
    'ahh, that one [the woman].'
    B: *tenai ant kalna, kur gyvena, ant Vaidilų čia.*
    'the one who lives on the hill, near Vaidilai here.'
    A: *tai ta, kur daba gyven su Jonu, išsiskyrus(i)su vyru.*
    'this is the one who lives with John now and is divorced.'
    A: *paimanti jinai buva,* **ane***?*
    'she won't refuse a drink, **will she**?'
    C: *tas anūkas – Jonas, kur aš tau pasakojau.*
    'that grandson is John, the one I told you about.'
    B: *a Barbalė tureja su Jonu vaiką?*
    'does Barbalė have a child with John?'
    C: *ne.*
    'no.' (CSL)

In this example, the son's (Speaker A) observation about a woman living in the neighbourhood and her bad habits does not receive direct confirmation from the co-participants. A commonly shared fact is stated; all the participants are aware of it, and the next speaker does not react to it and moves on to another point in the conversation.

Another pragmatic function of the particles in question is the reinforcement of the common ground among participants. The common ground is understood as "[t]he set of assumptions mutually accepted by the discourse participants and treated as true" (Haselow 2012: 189). The particles may refer to the interlocutors' common ground when creating an interactive environment during a conversation, appealing to shared rules, knowledge, and conventions. In the following interaction, two women discuss the duration and money benefits of maternity leave in Lithuania:

(15) A: *bet Lietuvoj tu gali išeiti du metus,* **ane***?*
    'but you can be [on maternity leave] in Lithuania for two years, **can't you**?'
    B: *man rodos, kad pirmus metus tau moka daugiau procentų, o po to, aš nežinau, kiek ten metų gali pasiimti ten tą motinystės atostoga*s.
    'it seems to me that during the first year you are paid more money, and after that, I don't know for how many years you can be on maternity leave there.'
    A: *man rodos, du metus,* **ane***?*
    'I think, two years, **is it/yes**?'
    B: *du metus, tai jo, antrus metus tada moka mažiau kažkiek ten procentų irgi, nežinau, kokios ten tos taisyklės.*
    'two years, it's true, during the second year then you are paid a little bit less too, I don't know what kind of rules there are.' (CSL)

The interaction is built on the previous interlocutors' knowledge about the maternity leave regulations in Lithuania. Speaker A uses the particle *ane* twice,

appeals to Speaker B's common ground and shared knowledge, and receives a positive response.

Moreover, the Lithuanian particles *ane*, *ar ne*, and *ar ką* can also convey the speaker's different subjective reactions to the previous discourse stretches. The particles *ar ne* and *ane*, used as speaker reaction markers to the previous discourse, can express mirativity, i.e., surprise and amazement at the unexpected or completely new information in the previous proposition (DeLancey 2001: 369). This function is most obvious when the particles are used as standalone ones. They indicate some sort of weak non-alignment between participants. It occurs in responsive turns in which the addressee is surprised by the speaker's previous utterance; he/she has doubts whether the interlocutor's words are true or wants to double-check the information provided, for example:

(16) A: *<...> iš esmės ta technologija leidžia turėti suvyniojamus telikus. Leidžia, ėėė, padaryti teliką mašinoj virš ant vietoj stogo.*
'<...> actually, that technology makes it possible to have rollable tellies. It allows, eheheh, to have a telly in a car on the roof or instead of the roof.'
B: ***ar ne?***
'**isn't it**?'
A: *nu, ten kaip nori, taip lankstosi.*
'well, you roll it the way you want.' (CSL)

In this example, *ar ne* is used by Speaker B to indicate that he is surprised by the information about rollable television sets provided by Speaker A. It is not a simple acknowledgment token; it conveys epistemic stance and clarifies that this information comes unexpectedly for Speaker B. On the other hand, this expression also marks affective stance as the information is received in more negative or sceptical rather than positive terms.

Moreover, the data show a frequent correlation between the occurrences of *ar ne*, *ane*, *ar ką*, and subjective evaluative statements. This function is most frequently manifested when the anchor is an adjective or noun phrase. The evaluation can possibly be positive (as in (18)) or negative (17); however, *ar ką* in fiction was particularly frequent in negative evaluative contexts (19):

(17) – *Taigi. Kvaila, **ar ne?***
'So. It's stupid, **isn't it**?'
– *Gal ir ne.*
'Maybe no.' (CCLL)

(18) – *Neisit prie bendro stalo?*
'Won't you sit down at the table?'
– *Ne. Dar pasėdėsim. Čia labai miela, **ar ne?***
'No. We'll stay here for a while. It is so nice, **isn't it**?' (CSL)

(19) – *Tu durnas, **ar ką**? Osa timpteli jį už rankos: Ką ten darei, Rogeri?
Rogeris neatsako.*
'"You are a jerk, **aren't you**?" Osa tugs at his arm: "What were you doing
there, Roger?" Roger doesn't answer.'(CCLL)

The investigated particles can also be used to express irony or reproach on
the speaker's part. In the following example, a daughter with her boyfriend visits
her parents, and they are preparing a meal in the kitchen:

(20) A: *atsigerk, tau, Aušra, alaus, Sauliau, nori mineralini*o?
'have a drink, for you Aušra – a beer. Saulius, wanna some mineral water?'
B: *ne.*
'no.'
A: *tai gal alaus nori?*
'so perhaps you want a beer?'
B: *man alaus neduosit(e), **ane**?*
'so you are not giving me a beer, **are you**?'
A: *ką?*
'what?'
A: *ką žinau, ką [/] ką jūs planuojat(e)?*
'what do I know? I do not know what your plans are.'

In this interaction, the boyfriend (Speaker B) ironically questions the
mother's (Speaker A) decision not to suggest him a beer. His question has some
reproachful undertones, to which the mother reacts with a self-face-saving
statement: "I do not know what your plans are".

In example (21), a mother back home from work is having a conversation
with her daughter. She has brought home a bouquet of gladioli:

(21) A: *nu, gražios gėlės, bet tai visi kaip susitarę,**ane**,*
'well, beautiful flowers, but everyone is, like, they have already agreed,
aren't they, on gladioli.'
B: *tai kardeliai, žinok, irgi gražios rudeninės gėlės, norėsi į namus
pasimerkt?*
'well, gladioli, you know, are beautiful autumn flowers, too. Wanna put
some in a vase at home?'
A: *uoj ne, nereikia man. Man gi kardeliai nepatinka, labai jie tokie
gigantiški.*
'oh no, I don't. I don't like gladioli, they are so gigantic.' (CSL)

The daughter expresses her disapproval by using *ane*, which provokes the
mother to justify her decision to buy this particular kind of flowers and react to
her daughter's words – "Well, gladioli, you know, are beautiful autumn flowers,
too". The daughter's reproach is reinforced by her explicit explanation that such

flowers are not her favourite. Though this use of the particle *ane* does not seem to align with the traditional definition of a question tag, which typically appears at the end of an utterance, it still retains its pragmatic functions.

3.2.2. Functions in the discourse structuring domain

As the findings show, the Lithuanian particles under study are multifunctional. They may feature in the interpersonal domain, displaying a wide range of different (inter)subjective speaker-addressee relations. Their discourse structuring, i.e., the textual function, is no less important.

The most prominent textual use occurs in longer utterances by the same speaker, where the particles serve as fillers and "non-specific, strictly cohesive intra-textual" devices (Sawicki 2016: 99). This happens in various explanations and illustrations. In the following example, the speaker describes the procedure of making dough:

(22) *Nu, ten paimi kiek pieno,* **ane***, nu įdedi du kiaušus, tada miltų ir į mikserį,* **ane***. Nu ir maišai tą tešlą.*
'Well, you take some milk, **yes**, put in two eggs, then some flour, and put everything into a mixer, **yes**. Then you simply mix that dough.'

The particle *ane* is inserted after each step introducing the succession of actions. The speaker here does not expect a confirmation on the part of the addressee but rather wants to make sure the co-participant is following the instructions. The speaker "may be quite certain of the truth of the proposition, but wish to heighten the involvement of the listener in the conversation" (Mithun 2012: 2180).

The findings also show that the interrogative particles in question can be used to introduce a new topic to the discourse, for example:

(23) A: *Oi, istorijų tai turiu su drabužiais. Hmm, džinsais...*
'Oh, I do have stories about clothes. Hmm, jeans...'
B: *Na, pasakok.*
'Well, tell me.'
A: *Žinai, ten turėjau žalius ir mėlynus. Dabar noriu raudonų.*
'You know, I had green and blue jeans once. Now I want red.'
B: *Nori salotų,* **ar ne***?*
'Want a salad, **don't you**?' (CSL)

In the conversation two girls are discussing their preferences for clothes. The particle *ar ne* added to the proposition "Do you want some salad?" indicates a topic shift and mitigates the abrupt topic change. It must be noted that this textual function mingles with the one of confirmation-seeking and genuine questions. Sometimes it is hard to keep the functions in the interpersonal and

discourse structuring domains (or between functions in each domain) discrete as "these different meanings may, in fact, *combine* in the same occurrence of the QT[6], for example, evaluative and seeking agreement" (Martínez Caro 2020: 232).

4. Conclusion

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative profiles of the semantic class of the interrogative particles in Lithuanian *ar ne*, *ane*, *ar taip*, *ar ką*, and *gal ne* offers ample evidence to claim that they can be used to form tag/disjunctive questions in Lithuanian and are indicative of functional diversification; this is an issue that has been slightly obscured in comprehensive grammars of Lithuanian.

Overall, the particles under study are more frequent in spoken register than in fiction. Though not attested in Lithuanian reference grammars or dictionaries, the particle *ane* is predominantly used in spoken Lithuanian and is an exclusive feature of colloquial speech. The frequency of its more formal counterpart *ar ne* takes the upper hand in fiction, as such texts are usually edited, and the particle seems to be a substitute for *ane*. In the given dataset, the tags a*r ką*, *ar taip*, and *gal ne* are very rarely employed in both registers and seem to be only subsidiary means of tag question formation in Lithuanian. They also exhibit no specific function peculiarities of their own. In general, there were no significant differences in the distribution of types of functions of all the particles in question in both registers; the only difference lies in their frequency of use.

Due to their inherent function of eliciting an answer from the interlocutor, the interrogative tag-forming particles usually receive one (verbal or nonverbal); however, they are not always solely employed for seeking confirmation, especially when they occur as stand-alone particles, are intertwined in longer stretches of discourse (in explanations or illustrations), or are used as statements of facts or shared information in an assertive way.

The results of the functional analysis show that, though the particles under study are multifunctional and perform various textual as well as interpersonal functions simultaneously (Brinton 1996: 2017), their predominant use is in the latter domain, i.e. they tend more frequently to feature in the interpersonal environment serving as (inter)subjective means (Traugott 2010) of involving the interlocutor into the situation discussed, eliciting his/her response, appealing to the common ground, or conveying the speaker's different subjective reactions to the previous discourse.

It must be admitted that the present study has several limitations. First, the functional interpretation of tag questions is very much intonation-dependent, and

---

[6] The abbreviation QT stands for 'question tag' or 'tag question' (Martínez Caro 2020: 216).

the corpora used do not provide any prosodic data. Second, the issue of polarity of the anchor and the tag should be taken into account. Finally, the particles studied are by no means the only possible markers to form tag questions in Lithuanian, so a contrastive study based on the data from a parallel corpus would provide deeper insights into the possible correspondences of English tags in Lithuanian, which, obviously, would not be restricted to the class of interrogative particles only.

Acknowledgments

References:

Aijmer, K. 2002. *English Discourse Particles: Evidence from a Corpus*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Algeo, J. 1990. It's a myth, innit? Politeness and the English tag questions. In C. Ricks and L. Michaels (eds.), *The State of the Language*, 443-450. Berkeley: Centennial Books, University of California Press.

Ambrazas, V. (ed.). 2006. *Lithuanian Grammar*. Vilnius: Baltos lankos.

Axelsson, K. 2011. Tag Questions in Fiction Dialogue. Doctoral dissertation, University of Gothenburg.

Balčiūnienė, I., and L. Simonavičienė 2009. Kiekybinis klausiamųjų šnekamosios lietuvių kalbos pasakymų tyrimas. *Lietuvių kalba*, *3*. Retrieved September 3, 2022, from https://www.journals.vu.lt/lietuviu-kalba/article/view/22873/22151.

Balkevičius, J. 1963. *Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos sintaksė*. Vilnius: Valstybinė politinės ir mokslinės literatūros leidykla.

Bayer, J., and V. Struckmeier 2017. *Discourse Particles: Formal Approaches to their Syntax and Semantics*. Berlin & Boston: de Gruyter.

Biber, D., S. Johansson, G. Leech, S. Conrad and E. Finegan 1999. *The Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. Harlow: Longman.

Biscetti, S. 2006. Tag questions in courtroom discourse. In J. Flowerdew and M. Gotti (eds.), *Studies in Specialized Discourse*, 209-238. Bern: Peter Lang.

Brinton, L.J. 1996. *Pragmatic Markers in English. Grammaticalization and Discourse Function*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Brinton, L.J. 2008. *The Comment Clause in English: Syntactic Origins and Pragmatic Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brinton, L.J. 2017. *The Evolution of Pragmatic Markers in English: Pathways of Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buysse, L. 2017. Question tags in translation. An investigation into the translatability of English question tags into Dutch. *Languages in Contrast* 17(2): 157-182.

DeLancey, S. 2001. The mirative and evidentiality. *Journal of Pragmatics* 33(3): 369-382.

Dunning, T. 1993. Accurate Methods for the Statistics of Surprise and Coincidence. C*omputational Linguistics* 19(1): 61-74.

Fischer, K. 2000. *From Cognitive Semantics to Lexical Pragmatics: The Functional Polysemy of Discourse Particles*. Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Grosz, P. G. 2016. Information structure and discourse particles. In C. Féry and S. Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Information Structure*, 336-358. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haselow, A. 2012. Subjectivity, intersubjectivity and the negotiation of common ground in spoken discourse: Final particles in English. *Language & Communication* 32: 182-204.

Holmes, J. 1995. *Women, Men and Politeness*. White Plains NY: Longman.

Jasionytė-Mikučionienė, E. 2019. Subordinating conjunctions as discourse markers in Lithuanian. *Corpus Pragmatics* 3: 285-301.

Kalėdaitė, V., and I. Bastienė 2012. Negation strategies in English and Lithuanian. *Darbai ir Dienos* 58: 201-221.

Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė, L., and I. Balčiūnienė 2016. Syntactically coded corpus of spoken Lithuanian: Developmental issues and pilot studies. *Kalbų studijos* 28: 92-101.

Kimps, D. 2018. *Tag Questions in Conversation: A Typology of their Interactional and Stance Meanings*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Kimps, D., K. Davidse and B. Cornillie 2014. A speech function analysis of tag questions in British English spontaneous dialogue. *Journal of Pragmatics* 66: 64-85.

König, E., and P. Siemund 2007. Speech act distinctions in grammar. In T. Shopen (ed.), *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (vol 1, 2nd ed.), 276-324. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

König, E. 1991. *The Meaning of Focus Particles: A Comparative Perspective*. London & New York: Routledge.

Labutis, V. 1994. *Lietuvių kalbos sintaksė (1 dalis)*. Vilnius: Vilniaus universiteto leidykla.

Martínez Caro, E. 2020. Discourse functions of question tags: Exploring the right periphery in English. In B. Achiri-Taboh (ed.), *Exoticism in English Tag Questions (Strenghtening Arguments and Caressing the Social Wheel)*, 215-235. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Mithun, M. 2012. Tags: cross linguistic diversity and commonality. *Journal of Pragmatics* 44: 2165-2182.

Morin, Y.C. 1973. Tag questions in French. *Linguistic Inquiry* 4(1): 97-100.

Panov, V. 2019. *Juk* and *gi*, and "particles" in contemporary Lithuanian: Explaining language-particular elements in a cross-linguistic context. *Kalbotyra* 72: 58-86.

Petit, D. 2010. On presentative particles in the Baltic languages. In N. Nicole and N. Ostrowski (eds.), *Particles and Connectives in Baltic*, 151-170. Vilnius: Vilniaus Universitetas & Asociacija "Academia Salensis".

Ruskan, A. 2019. Functional variation of discourse particles in Lithuanian: A look at clause Peripheries. *Corpus Pragmatics* 61: 1-23.

Sawicki, L. 2012. Responsive discourse particles in Lithuanian dialog. *Baltic Linguistics* 3: 151-175.

Sawicki, L. 2016. The Polish multifunctional particle *no*. In P. Auer and Y. Maschler (eds.), *NU/NÅ– A Family of Discourse Markers Across the Languages of Europe and Beyond*, 81-103. Berlin & Boston: Mouton De Gruyter.

Šolienė, A. 2015. Multifunctionality of modal markers: Lithuanian epistemic adverbials *gal* and *galbūt* 'perhaps/maybe' vs. their translational correspondences. *Kalbotyra* 67: 155-176.

Tomaselli, M., and A. Gatt 2015. Italian tag questions and their conversational functions. *Journal of Pragmatics* 84: 54-82.

Tottie, G., and S. Hoffmann 2006. Tag questions in British and American English. *Journal of English Linguistics* 34(4): 283-311.

Traugott, E.C. 2010. (Inter)subjectivity and (inter)subjectification: A reassessment. In D. Kristin, V. Lieven and C. Hubert (eds.), *Subjectification, Intersubjectification and Grammaticalization*, 29-71. Berlin: Mouton De Gruyter.

Valeckienė, A. 1998. *Funkcinė lietuvių kalbos gramatika.* Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas.

Wierzbicka, A. 2003. *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics. The Semantics of Human Interaction.* Berlin & New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Data sources:

CCLL – *Corpus of the Contemporary Lithuanian Language*: http://tekstynas.vdu.lt/tekstynas/.

CSL – *Corpus of Spoken Lithuanian*: http://sakytinistekstynas.vdu.lt/index.php.