

## NON-FINITE VERBS IN BALTO-FINNIC

Full presentation

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The aim of this paper is to examine infinitives and participles in Estonian, Finnish, Karelian, Livonian and Veps, looking at similarities and differences, with a particular emphasis on transitive verbs and the case of their arguments. The corpus consists mainly of Bible texts, particularly Matthew's gospel, for ease of comparison.

### Infinitives

There are several infinitives in the various languages, but the systems are not all the same, and the nomenclature varies. The tendency nowadays is to refer to the various forms by their suffixes. The most common ones are those with an underlying *-ta* and *-ma* form, the latter being found in several different cases, the most common being the illative, which often occurs in connection with verbs of motion.

Of the transitive infinitives in the corpus, the *-ta* infinitive was the most frequent in all the languages, except Livonian. The illative form of the *-ma* infinitive was the next most frequent, with about half the number of tokens. Livonian had almost equal numbers of these two infinitives. In Balto-Finnic the case of objects alternates between partitive and accusative. In all the languages *-ta* infinitives had a greater proportion of partitive noun objects than finite verbs in the present tense. The objects of *-ma* infinitives were more frequently partitive than those of *-ta* infinitives, with Estonian and Karelian having only one accusative object each.

The *-e* infinitive, in the inessive case, appeared in reasonable numbers only in Estonian (where it is called a gerund) and in Livonian. In Estonian it only had partitive objects, while in Livonian there was one accusative one, the rest being partitive. In the other languages there are few examples, some in the instructive case as well as inessive.

### Participles

Active and passive past participles occur in all the languages. They combine with the verb 'to be' to form compound tenses, and also function as adjectives and nouns. In addition there are participial constructions, which can substitute for finite subordinate clauses with the conjunction 'when'. These are most frequent in Finnish and Karelian, but there are differences between them.

Present participles are less frequent, and in Livonian the passive ones are absent. In Finnish the passive forms can express obligation as well as ability. In Estonian there is no meaning of obligation. The use of participles and their arguments in various constructions will be discussed.

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