

DIDELIS DĖKUI AND *DĖKUI LABAI*
IN THE MODERN LITHUANIAN (WRITTEN) LANGUAGE

Summary

The article deals with the question whether the thank-you constructions *dėkui* (*ačiū*) *labai*, *nuoširdžiai* (thank you very much, with all my heart) and *didelis*, *nuoširdus dėkui* (*ačiū*) (many, sincere thanks) are fit to use in the modern Lithuanian language. The thank-you constructions are addressed in a syntactic-semantic and thematic-rhematic structure aspect. The study relies on material gathered in the Corpus of the Modern Lithuanian Language (CMLL) by the Centre of Computational Linguistics of Vytautas Magnus University and the online translations dictionary LINGUEE.

Analysis of CMLL cases where the Lithuanian words for thanks, *dėkoju*, *dėkingas*, *-a*, *padėka*, *-q*, *dėkui*, *ačiū*, are used with prepositional and postpositional modifiers has shown that in the modern Lithuanian language, *dėkui labai* is used by the analogy of *dėkoju labai*, *labai esu dėkingas* (I am very grateful), which is to say by choosing a marked strategy of expression of thanks in a creative and competent way. The inverse *dėkui labai* is just as appropriate to use as other stylistically marked cases of expression. The addresser tends to choose an inverse order of words in a thank-you construction rarely (6.6proc. of all cases, or 53 cases out of 800).

In terms of word order and thematic-rhematic structure, the subject material allows mapping the following correlations of thank-you expressions. In (in)transitive sentences with neutral word order, the typical subject (*I*) that is marked by the nominative mirrors an unmarked topic, or theme, that is related to the principles of topicworthiness: different values of animacy, agency, definiteness, and so on (*Aš nuoširdžiai dėkoju Jums / esu nuoširdžiai dėkingas už pagalbą* (I thank you with all my heart / I sincerely thank you for your help); *Aš tariau Jums nuoširdžią padėką* (I am extending my sincere thanks to you)). When it comes to topicworthiness, the indirect object of the dative (*to you*) ranks second after the subject nominative to become the topic of the sentence. Then, the rheme of the sentence is expressed with a non-typical subject: a noun denoting an abstract thing (*Jai tenka*

nuoširdžiausia padėka (Sincerest thanks go to her); cf., *Jums patinka klasikinė muzika* (You love classical music)). The keyword or modifier of gratitude can be turned into a rheme by choosing to use active resp. passive constructions (*Aš skiriu Jums nuoširdžią padėką* (I give you my sincere gratitude) resp. *Jums skirta mano nuoširdi padėka* (You have my sincere gratitude)), exclamatory sentences (*Dėkoju širdingai jums už svetingumą!* (I sincerely thank you for your hospitality!) *Kokia aš tau dėkinga!* (How grateful I am to you!) *Kaip dėkui, kaip ačiū!* (Thanks so much!)). By using inversely worded thank-you constructions, the addresser accentuates the keyword of gratitude (*Dėkoju labai* (Thank you very much)), its valence actant (*Jums (o ne kam kitam) labai dėkoju* (Thank you (and not someone else) very much)) or modifier (*Jums dėkoju (ne bet kaip, bet) nuoširdžiai* (I thank you (not just in any way, but) sincerely)), much like in cases when the constructions *dėkoju labai* (thank you very much), *dėkingas esu labai* (I am very grateful), and so on. If the word order is neutral, the contrasting rheme is evidenced by the word *tai* (so) (*Tai labai, labai dėkui* (So thanks a lot)).

The limited number of LINGUEE translations have failed to confirm any influence an unmarked word order in the English or German language may have on the marked usage of *dėkui labai* (thank you very much) in the Lithuanian language.

Considering the actual usage of the modern Lithuanian language and the different strategies of expression of gratitude chosen to (non-)actualise the state resp. act of gratitude (*esu labai dėkingas* (I am very grateful) resp. *labai dėkoju* (thank you very much) resp. *labai dėkui* (many thanks)), the CMLL cases have revealed that the addresser uses *didelis / nuoširdus dėkui (ačiū)* (many/sincere thanks) to actualise gratitude perceived as a thing (cf. *Dėkui nešk Vaitiekui* (Give my thanks to Vaitiekus)). In an (in)transitive sentence, the economy-sized interjection *ačiū, dėkui* (thank you, thanks) that is trying to wiggle its way to replace a predicate argument expressed as a noun is marked after the example of the noun *padėka* (gratitude) with an agreement modifier: the adjectival modifier with *ačiū, dėkui* is agreed by choosing an adjective of an unmarked gender (masculine) (*nuoširdi / didelė padėka* (sincere/big gratitude) resp. *nuoširdus / didelis dėkui* (sincere/big thanks)). In some contexts, the construction *didelis / nuoširdus dėkui* (big/sincere thanks) can be contrasted with *labai / nuoširdžiai dėkoju* (thank you very much/sincerely). Still, one should believe that in cases when, owing to the economy of language, differences in the actualisation of the expression of gratitude, and/or other reasons, *ačiū, dėkui* in a sentence takes the position of the performative *dėkoju* or predicatively used *dėkingas, -a*, interjection modifiers are chosen on the basis of the latter (*labai / nuoširdžiai dėkoju* (thank you very much/sincerely), *labai /*

nuoširdžiai dėkingas (I am very/sincerely grateful) resp. *labai / nuoširdžiai ačiū, dėkui* (thanks a lot/sincere thanks)).

KEYWORDS: thank-you construction, interjection, inverse order of words, thematic-rhematic structure, interlanguage communication.

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