Finnish *en*-form converb expressing concomitance as a part of reported speech

Finnish; converbs; concomitance; parallel corpus; reported speech

Converbs, also known as gerunds or adverbial participles, can be defined as nonfinite verb forms whose main function is to mark adverbial subordination (Haspelmath 1995: 3). Finnish is referred to as a polyconverbal language (see e.g. Nedjalkov 1998: 430) and Finnish converbs has been widely studied as structures which can modify the main clause in a way that resembles both ordinary NPs and finite adverbial clauses; they can express also time, means or manner, purpose or lack of certain circumstances (Ylikoski 2003: 205).

This paper aims to shed light on the lexical representation of the E-infinitive form with instructive case (from now on -*en* form converb), which is one of the six semantically specialized converb forms in Finnish. The -*en* form converb usually expresses concomitance (Ylikoski 2022: 944), but also manner in general and simultaneity of situations (VISK 2004: § 516). The analyzed data were extracted from the subcorpus of fiction in the parallel corpus InterCorp v16ud (avalaible online: www.korpus.cz), which enables to compare and analyze data from Finnish fiction with its Czech and English counterparts and vice versa.

Comparison of Finnish non-translated and translated fictional texts shows difference in semantic groups of the most frequently used -*en* form converbs as well as statistically significant difference in their relative frequencies; in translated texts (i.p.m. 2 325,68) the -*en* form being more frequent than in non-translated texts (i.p.m. 1 385,19). Syntactic alignment of the parallel corpus InterCorp v16ud based on Universal Dependencies brings also the possibility to analyze larger context, e.g. the parent verb (parent lemma) of the -*en* form converbs, which leads us to the conclusion that in fictional texts, especially the ones translated into Finnish, the -*en* form converbs often accompany reporting verbs such as *sanoa* ‚say‘, *kysyä* ‚ask‘ and *vastata* ‚answer‘, which corroborates the previous results from a study on English reporting verb *said* and its modifications (cf. Čermáková & Fárová 2024). Further qualitative analysis of the Czech and English counterparts shows that the Finnish -*en* form converb is used as a translation counterpart of many more English and Czech syntactic forms than was understood so far (see examples 1-3), though its semantic repertoir is rather restricted, mainly to the verbs of motion, speech and perception.

1) FI: "Ei", Ford sanoi ystävällisesti **hymyillen**.
no Ford-NOM.SG say-3.PST friendly-ADV smile-EN.CVB
CS: "Ne." Ford mu věnoval přátelský úsměv.
EN: "No," said Ford and gave him a friendly smile. (IC v16ud - Adams)

2) FI: - Anna se minulle, Beatty sanoi väkinäisesti **hymyillen**.
give-2.IMP se-NOM.SG I-ALL.SG Beatty-NOM.SG sanoa-3.PST fixed-ADV smile-EN.CVB
CS: "Dej mi to, Guyi," řekl Beatty se strnulým úsměvem.
EN: "Hand it over, Guy," said Beatty with a fixed smile. (IC v16ud - Bradbury)

3) FI: “Prinsessa“, sanoi isoisä **hymyillen**.
Princess-NOM.SG say-3.PST grandfather-NOM.SG smile-EN.CVB
CS: "Princezno," usmál se.
EN: "Princess," he smiled. (IC v16ud -Brown)

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