

## Syntactic and pragmatic functions of the Latvian indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)*

### *Nelokāmā divdabja -ot(ies) sintaktiskās un pragmatiskās funkcijas latviešu valodā*

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Although the semantic, syntactic and especially pragmatic functions of the participles constitute a significant aspect of the sentence structure and also play a role in the area of stylistics, in Latvian linguistics, they have not yet sufficiently explored. Traditional Latvian grammars provide descriptions of the tense, aspect and voice meanings of the participles, while their pragmatic aspects largely remain unexplored. This study attempts to describe and classify syntactic constructions that involve the Latvian indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)*. The description of such constructions enables one to see whether the participle in *-ot(ies)* can be used in subjecthood tests to determine the subject of the sentence, especially in the cases of the non-canonical subject (e.g. the dative). With regard to pragmatics, it is important to understand why there is an increase in the use of the constructions involving the participle in *-ot(ies)* in Modern Latvian in various texts types and styles.

The participle in *-ot(ies)* is sometimes used against the principles of efficient language use because it renders the link between the action and its subject unclear and thereby hinders the perception of the content of the sentence. The possible reasons are clumsy translations from other languages (especially in the mass media and various applied texts), also the linguistic skills of the native speakers concerned, for instance, an insufficient mastery or careless use of syntactic constructions.

**Keywords:** indeclinable participle; linking; raising; control; agent; subject; object.

## Introduction

The syntactic functions of the participles are quite significant in several aspects of the sentence structure. The participles as non-finite verbal forms can participate both in the formation of the grammatical center of the sentence and in secondary predication constructions which involve the other components of the sentence (on the syntactic functions of the participles and their semantics from a typological point of view, see Shagal 2017).

The action expressed by the participle always has an agent therefore the participle linking regularities (in addition to other tests, for instance, the reflexive pronoun test) are often used in determining the grammatical subject, especially in the case of the non-canonical subjects (among others, Svenonius 2001; Sigurðsson 2004; Holvoet 2013).

This article attempts provide a systematic description of the syntactic and pragmatic functions of the Latvian indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)* in the sentence, to understand the link between the participles and subjecthood and also to clarify the question whether the indeclinable participles in Latvian are at all usable as subject indicators.

Latvian has two indeclinable participles which are formed by means of the affixes *-ot(ies)* and *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)*, respectively. This article mainly focuses on the participle in *-ot(ies)* which is one that is most frequently used in Latvian (among others, Pokrotņiece 2005, 37–38; Lokmane 2006). The other indeclinable participle in *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)* is only mentioned sporadically in the context of the constructions involving both participles. There is a more detailed study on the syntactic constructions involving the participle in *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)*, their semantic and pragmatic aspects and the analysis of their link to subjecthood (Kalnača, Lokmane 2018), therefore this indeclinable participle will not be examined here in more detail.

It must be emphasized that traditional grammars of Latvian mainly focus on the tense, aspect and voice meanings of the participles (also of the indeclinable ones), while their syntactic and, especially, pragmatic properties remain largely unstudied (see, e.g., Ahero et al. 1959, 661–664; Eiche 1983; Paegle 2003, 150–151; Nītiņa 2013, 585–592).

As it has been mentioned before, non-finite forms of verbs (participles and the infinitive) do not have overt subject and are therefore used for subjecthood tests in syntax and semantics (see Keenan 1976; Svenonius 2001; Kroeger 2004, 103–119; Sigurðsson 2004). With regard to the Baltic languages, this approach was applied by Seržant (2013, 292–293) who described the role of the indeclinable participle in *-nt* and the participle in *-dam-* in subjecthood tests in Lithuanian (for a typological analysis of language material from various Indo-European (including Latvian and Lithuanian) languages and also Finno-Ugric data, see also Menchi 2009). In Lithuanian, the agent of the indeclinable participle in *-nt* is normally different from the subject of the sentence unlike the agent of the participle with the suffix *-dam-* (Ambrasas 1996, 380–382).

Therefore, in Lithuanian, it is always clear that the agent of the participle in *-dam-* coincides with the subject, while the indeclinable participle in *-nt-* does not refer to the subject (see *ibidem* Ambrasas and also Ambrasas 2006, 358, 368–369).

Neither subjecthood tests nor the role of the participles in them has been applied to the Latvian language material, thus we adapted the approach by Ilja Seržants, initially applied to Lithuanian, re-applying it to Latvian, starting with the indeclinable participles, in particular with the participle in *-ot(ies)*.

Certainly, it is important to bear in mind the statements by Rūķe-Draviņa (1989, 397 and 399): “The syntactic models involving participles [...] usually are not the same in Latvian and Lithuanian, although the forms of the participles as such are known in both languages,”<sup>1</sup> and “While comparing Lithuanian and Latvian, it

<sup>1</sup> The original in Latvian: “Sintaktiskie modeļi, kuros ietilpst divdabji, .. nav vienādi parasti latviešu un lietuviešu valodā, kaut arī divdabju formas pašas par sevi būtu pazīstamas abās valodās.”

should not be forgotten that the participles that might be formally consistent in both languages might differ in their function and in their semantic connotations.”<sup>2</sup>

The mere fact that Latvian and Lithuanian are related does not mean the identity of the syntactic constructions and their functions in both languages (also in the case of the participles). Instead of comparing the indeclinable participles in Latvian and Lithuanian, this research rather focuses on the description of the syntactic functions of a Latvian indeclinable participle. Although the Latvian indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)* is similar in origin to the Lithuanian participle in *-nt* (Endzelīns 1951, 933–935; Ambrazas 2006, 351–357), it has different semantic and syntactic functions – in some constructions involving *-ot(ies)* the agent of the participle coincides with the subject of the sentence (see Paegle 2003, 150).

The participle in *-ot(ies)* from the active declinable present participle and is formed on the basis of the present stem of the verb by means of the affix *-ot* (non-reflexive verbs, see examples (1a-b)) and *-oties* (reflexive verbs, see examples (1c-d)) (see, among others, Nītiņa 2013, 585):

- (1) a. *domā-t : domāj-u : domāj-ot*  
 ‘to think : I am thinking : while thinking’  
 b. *lasī-t : las-u : las-ot*  
 ‘to read : I am reading : while reading’  
 c. *smie-ties : smeļ-os : smeļ-oties*  
 ‘to laugh : I am laughing : while laughing’  
 d. *sveicinā-ties : sveicin-os : sveicin-oties*  
 ‘to greet : I am greeting : while greeting’

The indeclinable participle in *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)*, which has no counterpart in Lithuanian (Endzelīns 1951, 926; Rūķe-Draviņa 1989, 396), is likewise used in various syntactic constructions (see in more detail Kalnača, Lokmane 2018). It needs to be emphasized that there are several constructions showing a parallelism of both indeclinable participles (see, for instance, Paegle 2003, 151; Kalnača 2013, 97; Nītiņa 2013, 591), but the paper does not focus on this issue, only briefly mentions it.

Therefore the paper focuses on the use of the Latvian indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)* to establish:

- 1) the types of syntactic constructions involving this participle;
- 2) whether this participle can be used in subjecthood tests;
- 3) the pragmatics of the participle.

The examples have been taken from various sources: fiction, public media, websites, *The Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian* (“Līdzsvarots mūsdienu latviešu valodas korpuss”, available at [www.korpuss.lv](http://www.korpuss.lv)), as well as *google.lv* search hits. The statistical analysis of the examples has not yet been carried out, as *The Balanced Corpus of Modern Latvian* has not yet been syntactically parsed.

<sup>2</sup> The original in Latvian: “Salīdzinot lietuviešu valodu ar latviešu, nav jāaizmirst arī, ka divdabji, kas pēc formas saskan abās valodās, tomēr var atšķirties savā funkcijā un nozīmes niansē.”

In Latvian, the indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)* is found in two basic types of constructions: raising constructions and control constructions.

## 1. Raising constructions

Raising is “a syntactic process by which a noun phrase or another element is moved from a subordinate clause into the structure of the larger clause that includes it” (Matthews 1997, 307) or, in other words, “any of various phenomena in which a linguistic element appears in a higher clause than is semantically appropriate” (Trask 2005, 25; similar definitions also in Bussmann 1996, 396; Brown, Miller 2013, 370; on participial complementation in Lithuanian, see Arkadiev 2012).

### 1.1. Raising to object or subject-to-object raising

The first type of raising constructions is *raising to object* or *subject-to-object raising* (e.g., Crystal 1997, 320). The participle in *-ot(ies)* is used in *subject-to-object raising* constructions with lexical verbs. The matrix verb in this case is usually a sense perception verb:

- (2) *Kapos redzēju viņu atkāpjoties aiz*  
 graveyard.NOM.PL.M see.PST.3 he.ACC retire.PTCP.IND behind  
*priedēm.*  
 pine.DAT.PL.M  
 ‘In the graveyard, I saw him retire behind the pines.’ (www.korpuss.lv)

At one level, *viņu* ‘him’ is considered to be the subject of the clause marked by the participle: *Es kapos redzēju [viņu atkāpjoties]*. But its form is that of an object, namely, accusative, therefore it is raised to the object position in the main clause. The agent of the participial clause (*viņu* ‘he’ in the example (2)) plays no semantic role in the matrix clause. Although *viņu* ‘him’ is the grammatical object of the predicate *redzēju* ‘saw’, the theme of *redzēju* ‘saw’ consists of the whole clause *viņu atkāpjoties*, and thus *viņu* ‘him’ only performs the semantic role of an agent in relation to the participle.

### 1.2. Raising to subject or subject-to-subject raising

In *subject-to-subject raising* constructions, the subject of a subordinate clause is raised to the position of the subject in the main clause (Crystal 1997, 320). The matrix verb here is the verb of appearance:

- (3) *Viņš likās ejot tālāk.*  
 he.NOM.M seem.PST.3 go.PTCP.IND further  
 ‘He seemed to be going further.’ (www.luteranudraudze.lv)

The explicit construction would be: *Likās, ka viņš iet tālāk* ‘It seemed that he was going further’. Although *viņš* ‘he’ is the grammatical subject of *likās* ‘seemed’, it does not fill any semantic role with respect to it. Instead, the predicate *likās* ‘seemed’ refers to a whole clause *Viņš iet tālāk* ‘He is going further’.

Subject-to-subject raising construction is also formed when the matrix verb is a sense perception verb forming the predicate with the help of the present participle in passive:

- (4) a. *Viesi bija redzami gan*  
 guest.NOM.PL.M be.AUX.PST.3 see.PTCP.NOM.PL.M CONJ  
*uz sarkanā paklāja un aplūkojot izstādi,*  
 on red.GEN.M carpet.GEN.M and visit.PTCP.IND show.ACC.F  
*gan pievienojās [apģērbu veikala] H&M pārstāvjiem pie galda labdarības*  
*pasākuma laikā.*  
 ‘The guests were seen both on the red carpet and visiting the show, and [they] joined the representatives of the [clothing shop] H&M at the table during the charity event.’ (www.korpuss.lv)
- b. *Jau 8. martā uzzīvētāji manīti*  
 already 8 March.LOC.M boozers.NOM.PL.M see.PTCP.NOM.PL.M  
*klaigojot pa apkārtni un strīdoties.*  
 wander.PTCP.IND around neighborhood.ACC.F and quarrel.PTCP.IND  
 ‘Already in March 8, the boozers were seen wandering around and quarreling loudly.’ (Latvijas Neatkarīgā Televīzija)

An interesting subject-to-subject raising construction can be formed if the matrix verb is a reflexive verb of speaking or pretending (*teikties* ‘to claim’, *sacīties* ‘to state something be the case’, *izlikties* ‘to pretend’). In this case the subject of the matrix clause unites the two roles of the agent – the attitude to both the action of saying or pretending and the action of not seeing (example 5a) or taking care (example 5b):

- (5) a. *Agra izlikās to neredzot.*  
 Agra.NOM.F pretend.PST.3-REFL it.ACC see.PTCP.IND  
 ‘Agra pretended not to see it.’ (www.korpuss.lv)
- b. *Ir, par ko aizdomāties vismaz vienam koalīcijas partnerim,*  
*kas sakās īpaši rūpējoties*  
 who.NOM claim.PRS.3-REFL particularly concern.PTCP.IND  
*par demogrāfijas jautājumiem.*  
 about demography.GEN.F issue.DAT.PL.M  
 ‘There is some food for thought at least for one partner of the coalition who claims to be particularly concerned about demography issues.’ (www.korpuss.lv)

Participle in *-ot(ies)* is also used as predicative with the verb *palikt* ‘to stay’ which, partly grammaticalised can be found in as copular verb:

- (6) a. *Vīrieti palika stāvēt.*  
 man.NOM.M remain.PST.3 stand.PTCP.IND  
 ‘The man remained standing.’ (www.delfi.lv)
- b. *Indra vēl kādu brīdi*  
 Indra.NOM.F PART some.ACC.M moment.ACC.M  
*paliek stāvēt durvīs.*  
 remain.PST.3 stand.PTCP.IND door-frame.LOC.PL.M  
 ‘Indra stayed in the door-frame for a while longer.’ (www.korpuss.lv)

The matrix clause of the participial clause can itself be non-finite: the indeclinable participle is dependent on another (usually declinable) participle:

- (7) *Suns, atpazinis nākot*  
 dog.NOM.M recognize.PTCP.PST.NOM.M come.PTCP.IND  
*savu saimnieku, priecīgi rēja.*  
 own.ACC.M master.ACC.M joyfully bark.PST.3  
 ‘The dog, having recognized the steps of its master, barked joyfully.’  
 (www.delfi.lv)

In all these raising constructions the other indeclinable participle in *-am(ies)* is also possible. Both indeclinable participles can even be used in a parallel fashion within the same sentence, which suggests that there is no semantic difference between the participles in the raising construction:

- (8) *Vaboles redzamas rāpojam pa augiem*  
 beetle.NOM.PL.F see.PTCP.PRS.NOM.F crawl.PTCP.IND on plant.DAT.PL.M  
*vai dodoties pāri ietvei.*  
 or go.PTCP.IND across pathway.DAT.F  
 ‘Beetles are seen crawling on plants or crossing the side-walk.’ (Uzzini)

However, in raising constructions contemporary Latvian tends to prefer the participle in *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)*. The reasons for this trend need to be studied in more detail but one of them might be the fact that the participle in *-ot(ies)* is mainly and widely used in control constructions which are examined further.

## 2. Control constructions

Participle in *-ot(ies)* is widely used in another type of syntactic constructions, where the participle with *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)* is not used, namely, in the control constructions.

Control may be defined as “a coreference relation between the understood subject of a non-finite clause and some other element that provides its interpretation. This element is called its controller” (Lyngfelt 2009, 33). In other words, the control is “the phenomenon in which a verb phrase with no subject is interpreted as having some subject” (Trask 2005, 54).

The controller may be syntactically realized, for instance, in infinitive constructions:

- (9) *Tieši šīs īpašības ļāvušas mums*  
 PART this.NOM.PL.F quality.NOM.PL.F allow.PTCP.PST.NOM.F we.DAT  
*izdzīvot līdz jaunajam gadu tūkstošim.*  
 survive until new.DAT.M millenium.DAT.M  
 ‘It is these qualities that allowed us to survive until the new millennium.’  
 (www.korpuss.lv)

This phenomenon is usually called *complement control*, where the controller is the object of the matrix clause (*mums* ‘us’). The controller fills two semantic roles, both as a patient of *ļaut* ‘to let’ in the matrix clause and as an implied agent of *izdzīvot* ‘to survive’ in the infinitive clause.

## 2.1. Adjunct control constructions

There is a subtype of control constructions, called *adjunct control constructions*, where the controller of adverbial adjuncts and free modifiers usually has the function of the matrix subject (Lyngfelt 2009, 38–40). In Latvian, we can find the indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)* exactly in the adjunct control constructions. There are several types of adjunct control constructions.

Most often the performer of the participial action is the subject of the matrix clause:

- (10) *Ejot tumsā viņš svilpoja.*  
**walk.PTCP.IND** dark.LOC.F he.NOM whistle.PST.3  
 ‘He was whistling, while walking in the dark’ (www.korpuss.lv)

It must also be stressed that the exemplified adjunct control constructions are frequently discussed in normative grammars of Latvian and are undoubtedly accepted as grammatical (see, e.g., Freimane 1993, 216–217; Lokmane 2006). With regard to the English participles in *-ing*, “..we could expect the unexpressed subject of the participial clause to be coreferential with that of the superordinate clause. ... Breaking this rule is considered an error, leading to the so-called unattached, dangling, hanging or misrelated participle” (Malá 2004, 72), for example, in the sentence:

- (11) *Having paid our bill, the waiter brought our hats.*

The Latvian language data suggest that the participle with *-ot(ies)* is often – and more and more widely – used for other adjunct type control constructions. For example, it would often appear in predicate nominal constructions, where, although the controller is the syntactic subject of the matrix clause, the predicate is a copular verb and a nominal that is used instead of a verb, therefore normative grammars recommend to avoid this kind of constructions:

- (12) *Tautastērpi ir gana smagi,*  
 national\_costume.NOM.PL.M be.COP.PST.3 rather heavy. NOM.PL.M  
*esot slapji.*  
**be.PTCP.IND** whet.NOM.PL.M  
 ‘National costumes are rather heavy, when whet.’ (www.tvnet.lv)

In passive sentences, the controller can take the grammatical subject in the semantic role of the patient, and not the agent of the matrix clause:

- (13) *Ārsts tika turēts aizdomās*  
 doctor.NOM.M get.AUX.PST.3 keep.PTCP.PST.NOM.M suspicion.LOC.PL.F  
*par 250 cilvēku nogalināšanu,*  
 on 250 people.GEN.PL.M killing.ACC.F  
*iešļircinot viņiem heroīnu.*  
**inject.PTCP.IND** they.DAT.PL.M heroin.ACC.M  
 ‘The doctor was suspected of killing 250 people by injecting them with heroin.’ (Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze)

Thus, in the adjunct control constructions, the performer of the participial action is often the subject of the sentence, although it does not always have the semantic role of the agent.

## 2.2. Pragmatic control constructions

The performer of the participial action may be present in the sentence but not as its subject in what are sometimes called *pragmatic control constructions* (e.g., Keenan 1976; Lyngfelt 2009) because the agent can be inferred from the meaning of the sentence and one's background knowledge:

- (14) *Ir svarīgi neļaut elitei glābt savu*  
 be.PRS.3 important prevent.INF elite.DAT.F save.INF own.ACC.F  
*ādu, novirzot sabiedrības uzmanību uz*  
 skin.ACC.F divert.PTCP.IND public.GEN.F attention.ACC.F to  
 „grēkāžiem”.  
 scapegoats.DAT.PL.M

‘It is important not to let the elite save their skin by their diverting focusing public attention to the “scapegoats”.’ (Nedēļa)

In this sentence, the agent of the participial action is the object of the matrix clause *elite* ‘the elite’, which the addressee can infer from his or her general knowledge, although the sentence structure admits other candidates for the role of the agent, namely those who ‘do not let the elite save their skin’. This particular ambiguity makes the grammatical constructions, where the agent of the participial clause is other than syntactic subject of the matrix clause, undesirable from the point of view of the normative grammar.

We can see similar discussions about the acceptability of the pragmatic control construction also in normative grammars of other languages, for example, English grammar (see, among others, Biber et al. 2000, 829–830). Lyngfelt (2009, 39) states: “Pragmatic control is way too common and too widely accepted to be simply regarded as ungrammatical. At most, it may be considered a fault of style. The acceptability issues regarding pragmatic control are not typical in English but also concern the Scandinavian languages and, to varying degrees, presumably all languages with similar constructions.”

The controller in pragmatic control constructions in Latvian can be used in different syntactic functions in the matrix clause.

For instance, as a complement of the matrix clause:

- (15) *Reakcija vairākumam bija vienaldzīga,*  
 reaction.NOM.F majority.DAT.F be.COP.PST indifferent.NOM.F  
*apgalvojot, ka politiķu sarunas*  
 claim.PTCP.IND that politician.GEN.PL.M conversation.NOM.PL.F  
*nav lasītas.*  
 not\_be.AUX.PRS read.PTCP.PST.NOM.PL.F

‘The majority reacted with indifference, claiming that they had not read the politicians’ conversations.’ (Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze)



In example (15) it is understood that it is the majority claiming that they had not read the politicians' conversations, thus manifesting their indifference.

The controller can be used as an attribute of a noun phrase in the matrix clause:

- (16) a. *Tajā dienā Mārtiņš darba diena*  
 this.LOC.F day.LOC.F Mārtiņš.GEN.M work.GEN.M day.NOM.F  
*beidzās, tiekot pie vairāk nekā 400 tūkstošiem*  
 end.PST.3 get.PTCP.IND to more than 400 thousand.DAT.M  
*euro.*  
 euro  
 'That day Mārtiņš'workday ended with him cashing in more than 400 thousand euro.' (Diena)
- b. *Summā Latvijas [bobsleja] ekipāžas rezultāts bija 3:16.91,*  
*atliekot gaidīt konkurentu rezultātus.*  
 remain.PTCP.IND await.INF competitor.GEN.PL.M result.ACC.PL.M  
 'In sum, the Latvian bobsleigh team result was 3:16.91 and it remained [for it] to await the results of its competitors.' (Latvijas Neatkarīgā Televīzija)

It follows from example (16a) that Mārtiņš is the one to have obtained the cash but example (16b) suggests that the team had to wait for the results of its competitors.

Frequently the agent of the participial action is not mentioned but can be inferred from the context and from our general background knowledge:

- (17) a. *Ierodoties viesnīcā,*  
 arrive.PTCP.IND hotel.LOC.F  
*organizatori bija uz vietas un sagaidīja.*  
 organiser.NOM.PL.M be.PST.3 on place.GEN.F and meet.PST.3  
 'Arriving at the hotel, the organisers were present and met us.' (Kandavas Novada Vēstis)
- b. *Šķērsojot Latvijas robežu,*  
 cross.PTCP.IND Latvia.GEN.F border.ACC.F  
*kravu aizturējis veterinārais dienests.*  
 cargo.ACC.F stop.PTCP.PST.NOM.M veterinary.NOM.M service.NOM.M  
 'While crossing the Latvian border, the cargo was stopped by the veterinary service.' (Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze)
- c. *Pie pieminekļa skanēs uzruna un*  
 by monument.GEN.M resound.FUT.3 speech.NOM.F and  
*muzikālais pavadījums, atskaņojot*  
 musical.NOM.M accompaniment.NOM.M perform.PTCP.IND  
*dažas dziesmas.*  
 several.ACC.PL.F song.ACC.PL.F  
 'By the monument, a speech will be delivered, accompanied by several songs' (Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze)

We can work out from example (17a) that the participants of an event have arrived at a hotel where they were met by the organizers, example (17b) suggests that a cargo truck has crossed the border of Latvia but in example (17c) some musicians will play some songs by the monument.

Due to syntactic irregularities and the uncertainty of the agent, the participle in *-ot(ies)* in pragmatic control constructions may cause ambiguity, for example:

- (18) a. *Tiesā supermodeli apsūdzēja par uzbrukumu*  
 court.LOC.F supermodel.ACC.F accuse.PST.3 of attack.ACC.M  
*asistentei,*  
 assistant.DAT.F  
**sagrābjot** viņu aiz rīkles  
**grabb.PTCP.IND** she.ACC.F by throat.GEN.F  
*un sitot pa galvu ar telefonu.*  
 and **hitt.PTCP.IND** on head.ACC.F with telephone.INS.M  
 ‘In court, the supermodel was accused of attacking the assistant by grabbing her by the throat and hitting her head with a telephone.’ (Marta)
- b. *Pētījuma mērķis ir apzināt*  
 research.GEN.M aim.NOM.M be.COP.PRS.3 find.INF  
*cittautiešu latviešu valodas prasmī,*  
 foreigner.GEN.PL.M Latvian.GEN.PL.M language.GEN.F knowledge.ACC.F  
**veicot profesionālus pienākumus Liepājā.**  
**fulfill.PTCP.IND** professional.ACC.PL.M duty.ACC.PL.M Liepaja.LOC.F  
 ‘The aim of the research is to check the foreigners’ Latvian language skills when fulfilling professional duties in Liepāja.’ (Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze)

In example (18a), the agent is the supermodel, but the syntactic make-up of the construction allows us to presume that the judges and the accusers could also be the attackers. In example (18b), the presumed agents are the foreigners, although they could also be the researchers.

Quite frequent pragmatic control participial constructions are the ones that use verbs of saying to signal that the speaker is the agent of verb contained in the main clause:

- (19) a. *Atklāti sakot, mums pašiem*  
 frankly **sakot**, we.DAT self.DAT.PL.M  
**speak.PTCP.IND**  
*nebija īstas skaidrības.*  
 not\_be.COP.PST.3 real.GEN.F clarity.GEN.F  
 ‘Frankly speaking, we did not quite know.’ (www.korpuss.lv)
- b. *Taisnību sakot, viņš bija*  
 truth.ACC.F **sakot**, he.NOM be.COP.PST.3  
**speak.PTCP.IND**  
*diezgan viduvējs rakstnieks.*  
 rather mediocre.NOM.M writer.NOM.M  
 ‘To tell the truth, he was a rather mediocre writer.’ (www.korpuss.lv)

Thus, in pragmatic control constructions, the controller is typically either realised as a complement or an attribute in the matrix clause, or can be inferred from the context and/or our background knowledge.

### 2.3. Arbitrary control constructions

The performer of the participial action may be abstract, it might be performed by anyone in general, and such constructions are referred to as *arbitrary control constructions* (see, e.g., Matthews 1997, 74; Lyngfelt 2009, 40–43).

Arbitrary control refers to the cases where there is no controller and the agent receives a generic or arbitrary interpretation. In other words, there is no controlling referent (see Lyngfelt 2009, 34).

- (20) a. **Braucot**            *uz Rīgu,*  
**drive.PTCP.IND**    to    Riga.ACC.F  
*ceļmalā*            *top*            *liela*            *ēka.*  
 roadside.LOC.F    build.PST.3    big.NOM.F        building. NOM.F  
 ‘When **driving** to Rīga, there’s a large being built by the roadside.’  
 (www.korpuss.lv)
- b. **Satiekot**            *uzņēmējus,*                            *šie*                            *cilvēki*  
**meet.PTCP.IND**    entrepreneur.ACC.M.PL    this.NOM.PL.M    people.NOM.PL.M  
*aizrāda, ka vajag*    *aplūkot*            *tādas*            *tēmas*  
 say.PRS.3    that    need.PRS.3    discuss.INF    such.ACC.PL.F    topic.ACC.PLF  
*kā inflācija.*  
 as inflation.NOM.F  
 ‘When meeting entrepreneurs, they suggest addressing such topics as inflation.’ (Nedēļa)
- c. *Bojā gājušo*    *skaitis*                            *ir*                            *divi*                            *simti,*  
 persih.GEN.PL.M    number.NOM.M    be.COP.PRS.3    two.NOM.PL    hundred.PL.M  
*precīzi*    **neatbildot,**                            *kāpēc tā*    *notika.*  
 precisely    **not\_answer.PTCP.IND**    why    so    happen.PST.3  
 ‘The number of the fatalities reaches two hundred, without providing the exact answer to why this happened.’ (www.korpuss.lv)

In example (20a), it can be gathered that anyone sees a large construction site by the road to Riga. In example (20b), however, it can be inferred from the context, that the agent of the participial action is generalized, namely, *If one meets entrepreneurs, they are likely to suggest such topics*. Similarly, in example (20c), the agent is generalized, implying that there is no one to provide the exact answer.

### 2.4. The absolute dative construction

Participial clauses with overt agents are also present in other languages and are called the absolutes (Malá 2004, 72). The participle in *-ot(ies)* in Latvian is widely used in the absolute dative construction where it takes a separate agent in the dative (among others, Endzelīns 1951, 933–934; Paegle 2003, 150; Ambrasas 2006, 425; Lokmane 2007; Nītiņa 2013, 586).

Such constructions are not only found in fiction (21a) but, in recent years, are increasingly met in the language of the media (21b-d):

- (21) a. *No rīta, saulei lecot,*  
 in morning.GEN.M sun.DAT.F rise.PTCP.IND  
*pārgāju pār Bruklinas tiltu.*  
 cross.PST.1 over Brooklyn.GEN.F Bridge.ACC.M  
 ‘In the morning, at the sunrise, I crossed the Brooklyn Bridge.’ (N. Ikstena)
- b. *Miers reģionā iespējams,*  
 peace.NOM.M region.LOC.M possible.PTCP.PRS.NOM.M  
*esot politiskai gribai.*  
 be.PTCP.IND political.DAT.F will.DAT.F  
 ‘Peace in the region is possible, if there is political will.’ (www.tvnet.lv)
- c. *Gadiem ejot,*  
 year.DAT.PL.M pass.PTCP.IND  
*kredītu izsniegšanas kultūra mainās.*  
 loan.GEN.PL.M approval.GEN.F culture.NOM.F change.PRS.3  
 ‘With the passing of time, the culture of loan provision has changed.’  
 (www.korpuss.lv)
- d. *Izdevuma atvēršanas svētki*  
 issue.GEN.M opening.GEN.F festivity.NOM.PL.M  
*notiks sestdien,*  
 take\_place.FUT.3 Saturday  
*piedaloties autoriem un interesentiem.*  
 take\_part.PTCP.IND author.DAT.PL.M and interested\_person.DAT.PL.M  
 ‘The book (etc.) opening festivities will take place on Saturday, with the participation of the authors and other interested parties.’ (www.korpuss.lv)

The absolute dative construction is not ambiguous because it has an explicit agent. From a pragmatic point of view its increasing popularity in the texts of various styles and genres is interesting and needs to be researched in more detail.

## To conclude

The Latvian indeclinable participle in *-ot(ies)* cannot be used in syntactic subjecthood tests. Despite the prescriptive norms stipulating efficient language use, the participle in *-ot(ies)* is widely used not only in adjunct control constructions, but also in pragmatic control and arbitrary control constructions. The controller is mostly interpreted semantically, its syntactic structure playing a less prominent role, which often results in ambiguous constructions.

Both indeclinable participles function in raising constructions involving different lexical group matrix verbs without any semantic differences, therefore they can be used in a parallel fashion within the same sentence. Nevertheless, the participle in *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)* tends to be preferred. It might be explained by the rather wide use of the participle in *-ot(ies)* in control constructions, besides it

is possible that the syntactic use of both indeclinable participles will continue to differentiate in the future.

The contemporary use of the participle in *-ot(ies)* in pragmatic control constructions is increasing. This fact could be explained by the developmental trends of the Latvian language itself (e.g., the constructions with *-ot(ies)* are shorter and more compact than subordinate clauses and many language users consider them stylistically more appropriate in the formal register), as well as it might be the influence of other languages, (to wit, English), owing to clumsy translations in the mass media as well as various applied texts.

## Abbreviations

1, 3	person
ACC	accusative
AUX	auxiliary
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
DAT	dative
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IND	indeclinable
INF	infinitive
LOC	locative
M	masculine
NOM	nominative
NP	noun phrase
PART	particle
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PRS	present
PST	past
PTCP	participle
REFL	reflexive
SG	singular

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## Kopsavilkums

Lai gan divdabju sintaktiskās, semantiskās un jo īpaši pragmatiskās funkcijas ir nozīmīgs teikuma struktūras izveides un arī valodas kultūras aspekts, to izpēte latviešu valodniecībā nav līdz šim bijusi pietiekama. Divdabju aprakstā latviešu gramatikas tradicionāli vairāk orientējušās uz laika, aspekta un kārtas nozīmju aprakstu, mazāk – uz divdabju saistāmības un pragmatikas aprakstu. Šis pētījums ir mēģinājums aprakstīt un klasificēt sintaktiskās konstrukcijas, kurās var iesaistīties latviešu valodas nelokāmais divdabis *-ot(ies)*. Šādu konstrukciju apraksts savukārt ļauj pārliecināties, vai divdabis *-ot(ies)* ir izmantojams teikuma subjekta noteikšanā, īpaši netipiskos, piem., datīva sintaktisko funkciju, gadījumos. Pragmatiskā aspektā divdabja *-ot(ies)* konstrukcijas ir svarīgas, lai saprastu, kāpēc mūsdienu latviešu valodā pieaug šī divdabja lietojums dažāda stila tekstos. Ne vienmēr divdabja *-ot(ies)* lietojums atbilst latviešu literārās principiēm, jo padara neskaidru teikuma satura uztverei nepieciešamo darbības un tās subjekta saikni – te iemesls var būt gan neveikli tulkojumi no citām valodām (īpaši preses un lietišķos tekstos), gan arī dzimtās valodas runātāju lingvistiskās iemaņas, piem., pavirša attieksme pret teikumā lietojamām sintaktiskajām konstrukcijām un to funkcijām.