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Abstract

This article presents an analysis of the structure and use of the Finnish "independent" infinitives. Although typological studies have shown that syntactically independent non-finite constructions are widespread in many languages, the understanding of their semantic and intersubjective motivation is still in its early stages. The current paper aims to enrich the understanding of independent non-finite constructions by closely looking at free-standing infinitive constructions in spoken and written Finnish: it combines theoretical concepts of Cognitive Grammar with the methodological tools of Interactional Linguistics to explore the nature of independent infinitives as a resource for conceptualization and the intersubjective functions that it affords. The paper suggests that the fact that independent infinitives are grammatically ungrounded makes them useful in interactional and textual sequences involving affect display. As the indexical functions of infinitives can be explained from their own morphosyntactic and semantic characteristics, the paper makes the more general claim that there is no synchronic evidence that would support the assumption that such constructions ever evolved, via ellipsis, from finite constructions. Methodologically and theoretically, the paper advocates an approach that takes into account both the social and cognitive nature of language, and promotes the view that Cognitive Grammar offers a flexible, semantically rich starting point for the description of intersubjective meanings conveyed by grammar, when combined with the context-sensitive and microanalytical methodology of Interactional Linguistics.

Keywords: infinitives, grounding, conceptualization, affect, intersubjective meaning, cognitive grammar

1 Introduction

Both formal and functional approaches to language traditionally consider infinitives to be an illustrative example of an inherently subordinated verb form. This is because they are morphologically reduced (e.g., Givón 1990; Lehmann 1988; Haspelmath 1995; Dik 1997; Cristofaro 2003, 2007), and allegedly, unable to function as the only predicate of an independent clause (e.g., Nedjalkov 1995: 97, Hengeveld 1998: 339). This article focuses on non-prototypical uses of infinitives, that is, on their use in contexts in which they function as independent grammatical units.[1] The paper is not alone in stating such independence; several typological studies have described different types of independent non-finite constructions – including infinitives – in a wide range of languages (e.g., Evans 2007, Nikolaeva 2007; Mithun 2008, 2019; Evans and Watanabe 2016, Wiemer 2017, 2019; Jedrzejowski and Demske 2017; Beijering et al. 2019). However, we still know very little about the pragmatic and intersubjective functions of independent infinitives.

Much of the research carried out on independently used non-finite constructions has focused on the challenges that they pose for the description of main-clause phenomena and the typology of

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[1] Terminology varies from *independent* (Visapää 2008; Wiemer 2017), *free* or *free-standing* (Deppermann 2006), *main-clause predicate* (Evans 2007; Wiemer 2017) to *insubordinate* (Evans 2007; Evans & Watanabe 2016).

finiteness. The main focus of this article is not to discuss the implications that such constructions have on finiteness, but to show how they are used in empirical data, as well as to provide an explanation for this use. Through a detailed analysis of a group of Finnish infinitive constructions (e.g., *Sanoa nyt tuollaista!* 'To say something like that'[2]; *Päästäpä matkustaaan kuuhun* 'To get to travel to the moon' = 'I wish I could travel to the moon'), I will suggest that independent infinitives are used in everyday interactions, as well as in more formal written contexts of use, to carry out highly complex intersubjective functions.[3]

The study works with the hypothesis that in Finnish, all independent infinitives have affective, intersubjective functions. In order to examine this, I will address the following questions:

1) What kinds of independent infinitive constructions can be attested in Finnish, and what kinds of affective and intersubjective functions do they have?
2) How can we explain the interlace between affect and independent infinitives?
3) How can these affective uses be interpreted in light of what we know about the use of "main-clause use" of infinitives in other languages?

I will study these questions in a framework that combines theoretical concepts from Cognitive Grammar (CG) (esp. Langacker 1987, 1991, 2008, and 2014; Verhagen 2005; Möttönen 2016) with the methodological tools of Interactional Linguistics, that is, using the methods of Conversation Analysis in the analysis of linguistic phenomena (see e.g., Ochs et al. 1996; Couper-Kuhlen and Selting 2018: 3–8).[4] The theoretical and methodological model adopted in this paper thus follows earlier works such as Etelämäki and Visapää (2014) and Fischer (2015); see also Gras (2012) for a similar combination of Construction Grammar and Interactional Linguistics in the study of insubordinate *que* constructions in Spanish.

The use and emergence of independent non-finite constructions has been analyzed in several theoretical frameworks, and in several languages, but, typically, in terms of a finite verb ellipsis. In traditional Finnish linguistics, independent infinitives have been mentioned since the 19th century, described as verbless constructions whose finite verb is elipted for pragmatically motivated reasons; the very fact of elipting the finite verb was said to create contextually detectable modal and affective meanings (e.g., Cannelin 1889, Penttilä 1963). In a wider linguistic context, "freely" used infinitives have been analyzed (mostly in the generative tradition) using the term *root infinitive* (e.g., Wexler 1994; Rizzi 1994; Etxepare and Grohmann 2002, Sugiura et al. 2016). In the generative framework, this term most commonly refers to "infinitives" used in directive functions by ca.

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[2] Quirk et al. (1984: 841) provide a similar construction in English, using the examples *To think that she should be so ruthless!* and *To think that I was once a millionaire!* (expressing "surprise"). The Comprehensive grammar of modern Swedish (*Svenska Akademiens Grammatik* 594, § 20) lists a similar infinitival construction: ***Att spöka ut sig så där!*** 'to haunt oneself like that'. For Dutch, see e.g. Boogaart 2010: 9: Zo dichtbij te zijn geweest! 'to have been so close' (the original translation is 'and we were so close', Boogaart 2010: 9).
[3] With intersubjectivity, I refer to the resources that participants of interaction have in achieving a state of mutual understanding (see e.g. Heritage 1984; Peräkylä 2008; Etelämäki 2016, Lindström et al. 2021).
[4] Approaches that study language in naturally occurring interaction often portray cognitive semantics as static and incapable of handling the intersubjective and context-dependent nature of meaning construction. This paper is based on the view that CG offers a flexible, semantically rich starting point for the description of intersubjective meanings conveyed by grammar, when combined with the context-sensitive and microanalytical methology of Conversation Analysis. In this way, language can be analyzed in a framework that allows enough flexibility for the emergence of actions and linguistic structures in interaction while, at the same time, enabling the description of a certain amount of stability and conventionality in grammar (see Etelämäki & Visapää 2014: 479).

two-year-old children (e.g., *melone essen*, 'I want melon', Lasser 2002: 771), before learning how to conjugate the verb "correctly". In functionalist studies, the syntactically independent infinitival forms are mentioned or analyzed by at least Quirk et al. (1985: 841), Noonan (1985: 54), Lambrecht (1990), Koptjevskaja-Tamm (1993: 32-32), Nikolaeva (2007), Deppermann (2006), Evans (2007), Visapää (2008), Etelämäki and Visapää (2014), Jedrzejowski and Demske (2017) and Wiemer (2017, 2019).

Even studies in which researchers insist on the synchronic independence of non-finite constructions and, in principle, question the inherent relationship of non-finiteness and subordination, usually explain the diachronic emergence of the constructions with respect to a conventionalization process in which a finite verb has been ellipted. This position is promoted by Evans (2007: 367), who introduced the now-widely-used term *insubordination*, which refers to the "conventionalised main-clause use of what, on prima facie grounds, appear to be formally subordinate clauses" (see also Verstraete et al. 2012: 4-5[5]; Beijering et al. 2019: 1–4). Evans insists that such insubordinate constructions are not synchronically elliptical: the ellipted material cannot be "recovered", and the construction has its own conventionalized meaning. However, diachronically, insubordinate constructions are assumed to be a result of a conventionalization process in which the previously subordinate element has become 'insubordinate'; the motivation for subordinate clauses becoming conventionalized as independent structures lies in their adoption of specialized discourse functions (see Evans and Watanabe 2016: 3).

The majority of the functionalist observations of independently used infinitives have been presented in either descriptive grammars or in typologically-oriented research that aims to describe the main-clause use of non-finites in a wide range of languages. In both contexts, the attention given to single constructions is, understandably, limited. One exception to this general trend is Deppermann (2006), whose study on the deontics of German infinitives (e.g., *Aufstehen*, 'get up') presents a detailed analysis of German free infinitives, and is deeply rooted in infinitives' interactional functions.[6] Deppermann (2006) analyzes the German free infinitives with respect to an ellipted modal verb, from which the modal functions are derived.

Closer to the position adopted here are Wiemer's (2017, 2019) diachronic studies on Slavic infinitives. In his (2019) study of "illusory insubordination" he states,

"[I]f we dig more deeply into the genesis of independent infinitives and their functional equivalents in South Slavic which are headed with the connective *da*, we discover that, most probably, these patterns diachronically preceded the subordination constructions (i.e., complex sentences) with which they have become associated in structural descriptions of the respective contemporary languages." (Wiemer 2019.)

Mithun (2008: 106) has also stated that although the "unstated matrix analysis" might be a reasonable hypothesis about the source of some of the constructions discussed by Evans, on the basis of her Navajo and Yup'ik data, "there need never have been a specific matrix clause that was omitted" (p. 107). Evans' explanation of the evolution of insubordination is also criticized by Lindström et al.

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[5] In their typology of insubordinated constructions in Dutch, Verstrate et al. (2012: 4–5) suggest that "the need to put face-threatening aspects of an utterance 'off the record' is what may have led to the ellipsis of a main clause that refers explicitly to the speaker's own desires".

[6] The A-infinitives differ from German independent infinitives in that they are not typically deontic (cf. Deppermann 2006: 8).

(2019), who show that the ellipsis hypothesis on the emergence of *if*-clauses is not supported by their Finnish conversational data.

The current paper joins these critical voices: whereas the finite verb ellipsis might be a plausible explanation for certain insubordinate constructions in some languages, there is no evidence that Finnish independent infinitives ever evolved via ellipsis. I will suggest that although independent infinitives indeed have "specialized discourse functions" (see Evans and Watanabe 2016: 3) and they manage interpersonal relations in many sense in the ways described by Evans (2007) and Evans and Watanabe (2016: 3), these discourse functions do not need to be derived from an ellipted finite verb or to be explained with regard to face-work. Instead, I propose that the motivation for the affective and intersubjective functions of A-infinitives lies in their morphosyntactically ungrounded form – in the fact that they designate verbal processes that lack personal, temporal and modal marking, whereas in Finnish finite clauses these categories are marked. I offer a detailed description of this morphological unmarkedness using the theoretical tools of Cognitive Grammar and then apply these in the analyses of the spoken and written examples.

The paper is organized as follows. I first introduce the Finnish A-infinitives (2.1), present a list of independent A-infinitive constructions in Finnish (2.2), and describe the data used in this study (2.3). In Section 3, I discuss the morphologically ungrounded nature of infinitive conceptualizations, and link this to the kinds of affective functions that this conceptualization affords. In the final section (4), I offer the conclusions of the study and discuss its generalizability and theoretical implications.

2 A-infinitives in independent contexts of use

2.1 Expressing affect, inviting recognition

The focus of this study is on the independent uses of one infinitival form within the Finnish infinitive system, the basic form of the infinitive (e.g., *tehdä*, cf. Eng. [*to*] *do*, German [*zu*] *machen*), henceforth *the A-infinitive*.[7] The A-infinitive looks like a typical infinitive in that it lacks personal, temporal and modal marking; this is in contrast with Finnish finite verbs, which are marked for these categories. The A-infinitive is prototypically used as a subject or object complement to a finite verb (e.g. subject: *Oli virhe **muuttaa maalle***, 'It was a mistake to move to the countryside', object: *Minä haluan **mennä** sinne*, 'I want **to go** there'), or as a modifier to a noun phrase (e.g. *Meillä on mahdollisuus **puhua** tästä myöhemmin,* 'We have the chance **to discuss** this later on').[8] (Descriptive Grammar of Finnish, DGF § 493).

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[7] The general trend in Finnish linguistics is to view the productive core of the infinitive paradigm as consisting of three infinitives. Traditionally, the forms have been referred to as the 1st, 2nd and 3rd infinitive, but in contemporary works, they are referred to using representations of their morphological markers: A-, E- and MA-infinitive. All infinitives have restricted case inflection and, to a limited extent, passive morphology (only the passive form of the E-infinitive is productive). The basic form of the A-infinitive has traditionally been referred to as the lative form of the verb: the morphological marking (-*k*) of the lative has disappeared, though, and it is, in this sense, an unmarked infinitive form. (DGF § 120; Herlin et al. 2005: 10–11, 37.)

[8] Many scholars of Finnish linguistics have pointed out that A-infinitives can also (marginally) be attested in contexts in which their syntactic connection to an adjoining finite element is looser. According to Karlsson (1979), for instance, the object marking of the infinitival clause can signal the infinitive's less integrated connection to the main clause (e.g., nominative case marking used in a context in which accusative would be expected). For free-standing A-infinitives see esp. Dubrovina 1979; Yli-Vakkuri 1986; Visapää 2008.

When A-infinitives are used outside the scope of the finite verb, they can be attested in conventionalized constructions that have two distinct semantico-pragmatic features: They are interpreted as indexes of **affect**, and they construe the described states of affairs as descriptions of **types** of process rather than actual processes. These distinct, but intertwined aspects of their meaning are illustrated by examples (1) and (2). The first extract comes from a newspaper interview with the wife of the former prime minister of Finland, Päivi Lipponen; the second example comes from spoken everyday data. In (1), the independent A-infinitive construction appears when Lipponen describes the astonishing nature of her first visit to 10 Downing Street. In (2), the speaker uses an A-infinitive construction to criticize her own absent-mindedness:

1. Etuoikeutenani on ollut myös pääsy mielenkiintoisiin paikkoihin. Ensimmäinen vierailuni Lontoossa Downing Street 10:ssä teki minuun suuren vaikutuksen. **Istua juomassa teetä historiallisissa huoneissa, joitten seinällä komeilivat Churchillin kuvat!**
'I have had the privilege of accessing interesting places. My first visit to 10 Downing Street in London had a huge impact on me. **To sit drinking tea in historical rooms whose walls boasted pictures of Churchill!**'

   Gloss of the target construction:[9]
Istua	*juo-ma-ssa*	*tee-tä*	*historiallis-i-ssa*	*huone-i-ssa,*
sit-A.INF	drink-MA.INF-INE	tea-PAR	historical-PL-INE	room-PL-INE
joitten	seinä-llä	komeil-i-vat	Churchill-in	kuva-t!
whose	wall-ADE	parade-PST-3PL	Churchill-GEN	picture-PL

2. *Mä voi-n lait- hmh. Seistä tässä nyt tuo-n tyhjä-n kaljapullo-n kanssa*
'I can pu- hmh. To stand here with an empty bottle of beer' (personal notes[10])

   Gloss of the target construction:
Seistä	*tässä*	*nyt*	*tuo-n*	*tyhjä-n*	*kaljapullo-n*	*kanssa*
stand-A.INF	here	now	that-GEN	empty-GEN	beer.bottle-GEN	with

By **affect**, I refer to the affective attitude and action that these constructions are indexing in a specific context (e.g. criticism, astonishment). Whereas A-infinitives that function as parts of finite clauses can participate in all types of predications – affective or non-affective –, independent A-infinitives are always interpreted as indexes of affect-laden actions. In the terminology of speech act theory, they could be analyzed as speech acts whose illocutionary force is always expressive (see e.g. Searle and Vanderveken 1985; Langacker 2008: 471). In example (1), for instance, Lipponen uses the A-infinitive to express positive affect of 'astonishment': literally, she describes the process of drinking tea in historical rooms, but when she does this using an independent infinitive, she also frames the event as being "delightful", "amazing" or "unbelievable". In this example, as in most of the cases in my data, the preceding context (here esp. *privilege, interesting, huge impact*, exclamation mark) guides the interpretation of the construction, but anything expressed with an A-infinitive will be interpreted as an index of an affective, expressive action. This is further illustrated by example (2): literally, the construction describes the process of standing in line in the grocery store with an empty bottle of beer, but the affect that the speaker is expressing is to criticize her own absent-mindedness, having forgotten to put the bottle in the recycling bin. Although I suggest that these

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[9] I will present all examples in the following manner: I will first give the original Finnish example, followed by an English translation as well as a gloss of the target construction. The infinitive constructions are marked in boldface both in the original and the translation. The longer conversational examples are glossed troughout.
[10] I thank Marja-Leena Sorjonen for this example.

constructions are conventionally associated with such expressive functions, I do not analyze them as indexes of speaker-intention. Rather, this conventionalized affeciveinterpretation is part of their constructional semantics (or a 'default inference', in terms of Levinson 2000: 22–23), whose interpretetation always relies on a local textual and sequential setting (and the participants' intersubjective understanding of it).

In addition to signalling an recognizable affective stance, the independent infinitives are used in a way that invites recognition from the other participants. This intersubjective orientation can be derived from the fact that all A-infinitive constructions construe the described states of affairs as a process type rather than an actual process (see Langacker 1991, 1999). In example (1), for instance, the described 'sitting' is Lipponen's actual, past experience, but the infinitive construction construes her experience as something that it is being talked about on a non-factual level – as an 'idea' of such an event. The same holds true for example (2): in addition to criticizing her own action, the speaker expresses criticism of such an action as an idea ('to do something like that – who would do that?'). As later explored in Section 3, I suggest that this "type" construal stems from the fact that the process expressed by the infinitive is grammatically ungrounded – it is not specified with respect to the participants, the time of the speech event nor its factuality. Leech (1987: 114) has called such meaning *theoretical,* as opposed to *factual* and *hypothetical* meanings.[11] According to him (ibid.), theoretical conceptualization can be achieved with grammatical means, for instance, with infinitives or the subjunctive (see also Haspelmath 1989: 288, Peltola 2011). In Finnish, when A-infinitives are used outside the scope of the finite verb, they always have this kind of "theoretical", generalizing type-meaning.

Such theoretical meaning has apparent intersubjective motivation, as it can offer the described states of affairs (and/or the affect associated with it) for anyone to recognize. By construing states of affairs as ideas, A-infinitives can reduce epistemic asymmetry between participants. In example (1), for instance, participants who may have no first-hand experience of being inside 10 Downing Street (e.g., the reader and the interviewer) can possibly relate to the idea of the experience that Lipponen is describing, or at least to the feeling of being excited, on the basis of similar experiences of their own (cf. Goodwin and Goodwin 1992: 165, 182; Heritage 2011). The theoretical meaning can also provide an asset for presenting criticism: by using an A-infinitive construction, the speaker can use such constructions to present affect towards types of processes, rather than towards something that they (or others) have directly experienced. Through the lens of A-infinitive constructions, affective comments can thus be presented in a way that is not directly about the world and its participants as such but rather about the structural type plane, about "how the world is made" (see Langacker 1999: 250).

2.2 The subtypes of A-infinitive constructions in Finnish

Finnish has seven conventionalized A-infinitive construction types (see Visapää 2008: 35–48). These differ from each other in terms of whether they require lexically specified elements – many of the constructions have rather fixed pragmatic particles attached to them –, or whether they are

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[11] In his examples, *It's laughable that Septimus is in love* presents Septimus being in love as a fact. *It would be laughable if Septimus were in love* treats the same state of affairs as counter-factual (in Leech's terms, "hypothetical"); it is known that he is not in love. *It's laughable that Septimus should be in love*, on the other hand, is "theoretical": it is irrelevant whether something is actually true or not, it is treated as the 'idea' of such an event.

built around a "bare" infinitival clause. The former tend to express conventionalized affective functions, whereas the latter are interpreted only with the help of the context. The constructions – their schematic form and their affective function – are listed in the following; each example is followed by a translation, as well as a glossing of the target construction.

a. FORM: "BARE" A-INFINITIVE WITH OBJECT AND/OR ADVERBIAL COMPLEMENTS
   FUNCTION: TO EXPRESS AFFECT; AFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION VARIES CONTEXTUALLY

   3. Ja mitä minä sillä huvilalla teen? En huoli. **Kutsua sinne vieraita ja näytellä heille kasvillisuuksia, mitata ilmaa, mitata vettä, ihailla auringonpaistetta, ihailla kun auringonpaiste menee pois.** Mitä niissä on ihailtavaa. (Maria Jotuni 1963, *Huojuva talo* ('A Tottering House', a novel), p. 215)

   'And what would I do with that house? I don't want it. **To invite guests there and show them the vegetation, to measure the air, measure the water, admire the sunshine, admire the sunshine when it leaves**. What is there to admire. '

   Gloss of the target construction:

Kutsua	*sinne*	*viera-i-ta*	*ja*	*näytellä*	*he-i-lle*
Invite-INF	there	guest-PL-PAR	and	present-INF	3PL-PL-ALL

kasvillisuuks-i-a,	*mitata*	*ilma-a,*	*mitata*	*vet-tä,*
vegetation-PL-PAR	measure-INF	air-PAR	measure-INF	water-PAR

ihailla	*auringonpaistet-ta,*	*ihailla*	*kun*	*auringonpaiste mene-e pois.*
admire-INF	sun.shine-PAR	admire-INF	when	sunshine go-3SG away

b. FORM: A-INF + PARTICLE NYT ('now') + OBJECT AND/OR ADVERBIAL COMPLEMENTS
   FUNCTION: TO CRITICIZE AN UNEXPECTED ACT; CAN ALSO EXPRESS POSITIVE ASTONISHMENT

   4. L: eks sä juo laita sokeria kahviin ollenkaa ('you dont drink put any sugar in your coffee')
   S: no. ('no)
   L: ai jaa. ('I see')
   S: **pilata nyt sit kahvii sokerilla.** ('to ruin coffee with sugar')
   L: hehehe joo jo. (hehehe yea y)

   Gloss of the target construction:

pilata	*nyt*	*sit*	*kahvii*	*sokerilla*
ruin-INF	now	then	coffee	sugar-ADE

c. FORM: A-INF + SIINÄ SITTEN ('THERE THEN') + OBJECT AND/OR ADVERBIAL COMPLEMENTS
   FUNCTION: TO AFFECTIVELY COMMENT ON AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK

   5. Vittu, seisoin siinä vessan peilin edessä tuijottaen paskaista naamaani ja pohdin käydäkö suihkussa vai ei. Buranan olisi pitänyt vaikuttaa jo parikymmentä minuuttia sitten, mutta hikipisaroita ei otsalla näkynyt. **Mennä siinä sitten 40 asteen kuumeessa suihkuun**. No way. (internet, a novel)

   'Fuck, I was standing there in front of the mirror looking at my shitty face and thinking whether or not to take a shower. The ibuprofen should have worked already twenty minutes ago, but there were no beads of sweat on my forehead. **To go there then and take a shower with a 40-degree fever** ('in this circumstance impossible'). No way.'

Gloss of the target construction:

Mennä	*siinä*	*sitten*	*40*	*astee-n*	*kuumee-ssa*	*suihku-un*
go-INF	there	then	40	degree-GEN	fever-INE	shower-ILL

d.   FORM: INF + -PA[12] (CLITIC PARTICLE) + OBJECT AND/OR ADVERBIAL COMPLEMENTS
FUNCTION: TO EXPRESS (UNFULFILLED) WISHES

6. Tarkistin internetistä hänen v. 1997 tulonsa: 39,8 miljardia dollaria! **Päästäpä hänen kenkiään kiillottamaan!** Bill Gates ansaitsee enemmän kuin 50 % amerikkalaisista yhteensä. (internet, a blog text)

'I checked his income for 1997: 39,8 billion dollars! **To be allowed to clean his shoes!** Bill Gates earns more than 50 % of all Americans put together.'

Gloss of the target construction:

Päästä-pä	*hän-en*	*kenk-i-ään*	*kiillotta-maan!*
Get-INF-CLIT	his	shoes-PL-POSS	shine-MA-INF

e.   FORM: AJATELLA/KUVITELLA ('TO THINK'/'TO IMAGINE')
FUNCTION: TO WONDER, OFTEN SARCASTICALLY

7. Jari: >Ajattele< ei euroa tunnistant?, ('think it didn't recognize the euro')
Satu: **Ajatella**. ('to think')

Gloss of the target construction:
Ajatella
Think-INF

f.   FORM: INF (+ QUESTION PARTICLE -KO) + VAI ('OR') + INF (+ QP -KO)
FUNCTION: TO PRESENT DOUBT (RHETORICALLY) IN FACE OF TWO ALTERNATIVES

8. Kun Tshetshenian Groznyia alettiin pommittaa, alkoi ystävyyskaupunki-idea tuntua irvokkaalta. Minä painin viikkokausia moraalisen ongelmani kanssa. **Lähteä vai ei?** (newspaper, article)

'When the bombing of Chechnya's Groznyi started, the idea of twinned cities started to feel grotesque. I struggled with my moral problem weeks and weeks. **To go or not to go**?'

Gloss of the target construction:

Lähteä	*vai*	*ei?*
Leave-INF	or	NEG

g.   FORM: INF + X + JA ('AND') + KUOLLA ('DIE ')/ VARIATIONS OF THE IDIOM SEE NAPLES AND DIE (VEDI NAPOLI E POI MUORI)
FUNCTION: EXCLAMATION OF 'HAVING KNOWN X, YOU HAVE KNOWN LIFE'

9. Ei muuta kuin illaksi Helsinkiin, maksoi mitä maksoi. **Kuulla Iron Maiden ja kuolla!** (newspaper, review)
'Just go to Helsinki for the evening, no matter what it costs. **To hear Iron Maiden and die.**'

Gloss of the target construction:
Kuulla   Iron   Maiden   ja   kuolla

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[12] This is the only syntactic context in which the clitic *-pA* is combined with an infinitive verb form; otherwise *-pA* necessarily attaches to the first element of a clause (*Descriptive Grammar of Finnish* § 133).

| Hear-INF | Iron | Maiden | and | die-INF |

A-infinitive constructions that belong to group (a) are constructions that are built around a simple infinitival clause with no specific particles attached; their affective functions are constructed simply on the basis of their textual and sequential context (see also example 1) – these constructions are most flexible and chameleon-like in their affective use. Cases (b–g) illustrate more idiomatic constructions, which all include specified lexical elements and express conventionalized affective functions (e.g., disapproving criticism, wish, astonishment.). The combination of the A-infinitive and the particle *nyt* (A-INF + NYT CONSTRUCTION, type b), for instance, expresses negative (or positive) affect towards an unexpected event or action. A-INF + SIINÄ SITTEN (type c) expresses frustration associated with a difficult, impossible task, and the A-INF + -PA CONSTRUCTION (type d) unfulfilled wishes (*Ollapa Roomassa*, 'to be-*pA* in Rome', 'I wish I was in Rome'). *To think* is used to express exclamative astonishment (type e), and type f illustrates a construction that presents two alternatives with the affective tone of uncertainty. The construction in (g) is the most marginal and least productive, as it comprises of the elaborations and extensions of the construction *See Naples and die*, which could be attested in my data.[13]

Despite their different formal and functional characteristics, all of these constructions share the described affective interpretation as well as a theoretical type-meaning. In the remainder of this article, I will analyze cases of different types of A-infinitive constructions, but even in contexts where only one type of construction is discussed, the main theoretical findings will be applicable to all of these constructions alike.

2.3 The data used in the study

This research is based on a dataset comprising of 404 examples of independent A-infinitive constructions that come from various kinds of Finnish written and spoken data. This heterogeneous dataset is comprised of a small set of examples that was collected from the Language Bank of Finland, as well as field notes, internet searches that were made by lexically specifying verbs and particles, examples from naturally occurring conversations, as well as cases gathered from all other textual environments I was engaged in while collecting the data in 2001–2008. The data was brought together systematically: all occurrences of syntactically independent A-infinitives that were found were included in the corpus. This method resulted in 404 cases of independent A-infinitives. The sources of data are briefly described below:

Table 1. Sources of data

Total	**404**
Language Bank (*all independent A-infinitive constructions in the morphosyntactically coded electronic corpora,* subcorpus of newspapers published between 1995–1999)	158
Individually encountered examples (data gathered from all textual environments I was engaged in while carrying out the study)	127

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[13] Many of these constructions have near-equivalents in other languages. I leave the exploration of language-contact and borrowing for later research. First cases of independent A-infinitive constructions in my data date back to Aleksis Kivi's *Seven Brothers* (1870), the first novel written in Finnish by a Finnish-speaking author.

All studied cases include not only the construction itself but also the larger textual or sequential context in which the construction was attested. Each construction was carefully studied in its context of use, which resulted in the classification of the infinitive construction types in Finnish (2.2.).

3 A-infinitives as grammatically ungrounded conceptualizations

In this section, I suggest that the affective and intersubjective nature of independent A-infinitive constructions can be derived from their nature as morphologically unmarked, ungrounded conceptu- alizations. In order to do this, I first discuss infinitives' relation to grounding. I suggest that inde- pendently used A-infinitives do not include any fixed, grammatically objectified organizations of the ground, and that this leads them to construe the ground in a maximally subjective way (3.1.). I then show, using select examples, that despite the subjective construal of the ground, the objectified infinitival process presents the described process types in a maximally open way, for anyone to rec- ognize, as it does not posit asymmetries between the interactants with respect to participant roles, time or modality, typically expressed in a verbal process but left unmarked in the infinitive (3.2).

3.1 The ungrounded infinitive: the subjective construal of the ground

One of the central tenets of CG is that every grammatical construction imposes a particular con- strual on its semantic content: speakers draw upon conventionalized grammatical constructions when configuring new utterances, and each conventionalized construction offers a distinct way of conceptualizing the described situation (Langacker 1999: 26). If we apply this to the comparison of Finnish A-infinitives and finite sentences on an abstract level, we can say that speakers can choose between two verb-based predications that construe their semantic content differently: both are free- standing constructions that comprise of a verb and its arguments, but the A-infinitive constructions differ from finite clauses in that they lack personal, temporal and modal marking. In this way, they conceptualize their semantic content – the process and its participants – in a different way to finite clauses.[14]

    For this reason, the most crucial concept for analyzing the use of independent A-infinitive constructions will be that of grounding. With *grounding*, Langacker (1987, 1990, 1991b: 53, 1999:

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[14] Arguing for a discrete, morphosyntax-based analysis when exploring the nature of independent infinitives might seem restricted in the sense that many functional-typological researchers have convincingly argued for a scalar approach to finiteness/non-finiteness. Instead of stressing the differences or even dichotomy between finiteness and non-finiteness these scholars argue that one should see them as scalar properties that are at- tested in different combinations in various languages and constructions (e.g., Givón 1990: 852–891; Noonan 1985; Lehmann 1988; Hengeveld 1998; Haspelmath 1995; Dik 1997; Bisang 2007; Cristofaro 2007; for Finn- ish, see Hakulinen & Karlsson 1979: 337–339; DGF § 872). As Bisang (2007: 122) points out, within an indi- vidual language, finiteness and non-finiteness can, however, often be approached as morphologically defined categories. I do not see finiteness and non-finiteness as necessarily correlating with the independent vs. de- pendent distinction, but in Finnish, there is definitely a discrete criterion for talking about finite vs. non-finite morphology.

219–220; 2008: 259) refers to the grammaticized means with which speakers organize the relationship of linguistic elements and the speech situation, with respect to all the knowledge they have about the ongoing situation. Langacker considers the speech situation to be the ultimate conceptualization platform of all linguistic expression: grounding makes no fundamental distinction between what are traditionally referred to as the indexical or deictic elements of language and other linguistic units. Even utterances that do not include elements that explicitly refer to the speech situation can only be interpreted in its framework (Langacker 1999: 219). However, units that do not include any grammaticized elements of the relationship can be thought of as *grammatically ungrounded*.

Ground has three types of presence in semantic structures. Firstly, an element of ground can be explicitly mentioned as in the case of the first and second person pronouns or the adverb *now*. Secondly, ground can be activated by less explicit grammatical markers, when some aspect of the ground functions as the reference point of the utterance without being explicitly mentioned (*grounding predications,* in English, i.e., tense, articles and demonstratives). The third group that Langacker mentions is the most relevant for the purposes of this study: it includes various kinds of non-deictic elements that include no conventionalized indexical reference to the speech situation (e.g., *table, between*). (Langacker 1991; 1999: 219–220).

It is often stressed in linguistics that deictic elements are units that show the inherent link between language and its context of use. However, deictic elements – and in Langacker's terminology, any grounding elements – can also be seen as elements that enact and create a conceptual distance between the speech event and the linguistic structure (cf. Verschueren 2000: 440). Every grounded element of language is essentially a metapragmatic sign of the speech situation functioning as its ground. Finnish finite clauses, for example, necessarily contain grounding predications in their finite verb and thus conceptualize the relationship of the utterance and the ground as part of their semantics. Independent A-infinitive constructions, on the other hand, notably lack all distancing and objectifying of the ground; they construe the ground in a *maximally* subjective way (for the objective/subjective construal of the utterance and the ground, see also esp. Verhagen 2005).

In terms of the verb as their core, infinitives are thus ungrounded constructions that contain no grammatical elements that organize the relationship of the utterance and the speech situation. Thus, they belong to the third group, "where the ground is neither mentioned nor invoked in any capacity other than its universal role as the viewing platform" (Langacker 1999: 219; see also Verhagen 2005: 18 for ungrounded nouns). However, although not conceptualized with respect to the speech event, independent infinitives are always grounded by language use, the situation and the activity in which they occur (Langacker 1999: 218–219). They are, in other words, indexical, like all language use (see e.g., Lucy 1993).

I suggest that this is "floating", indexical nature of independent A-infinitive constructions is the core reason why they have "specialized" discourse functions and are always interpreted as indexes of affect. (See also Levinson 2000: 6.) As there are no grounding elements to guide their interpretation, they are simply grounded indexically, by the ongoing activity. Furthermore, as the constructions are not organized in their verbal morphology with respect to the speech situation, it is the *conceptualizer* (Langacker 1991b: 79, 159; 2008: 73; Möttönen 2016: 46) that always functions as the central perspective for interpreting these constructions. In fact, in written contexts of use, A-infinitives seem to present the states of affairs "directly" from the focalizer's point of view.[15] Also in spoken interaction, the other interactants are invited to adopt the perspective of the affect-displaying

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[15] A-infinitives are only used in written genres that allow the writers' own voice to be explicitly present.

participant (see 3.2.). It is ultimately the speaker – or in written texts, whoever is construed as the focalizer –, whose affective stance is conveyed.

3.2 The ungrounded infinitive: an objectively construed process type

While independent A-infinitive constructions construe the ground in a maximally subjective way, in their profile, they objectively construe a process type. In this section, I explore in more detail the ways in which this process type is construed, with respect to the constructions' morphological umarkedness.

3.2.1 Construing place for open human reference

A key semantic feature of independent A-infinitive constructions is that are systematically inter-preted as indexes of human experience.[16] That is, they are interpreted from the focalizer's perspec-tive (3.1.), but at the same time, they open a place for a more schematic human experiencer that is associated with the semantics of the infinitival verb. This "experiencer" can coincide with the focal-izer – for instance, in the case where a speaker is commenting on their own experience (e.g. *To stand here with an empty beer bottle*), where she is interpreted to be both the "stander" and the one who comments on standing) –, but it can also be distinct from the focalizer. I illustrate this with ex-amples (10) (type c) and (11) (type b):

10.   Säälin erikoisesti yritysväkeä, joka kohtaa kovan taksan sekä kuluissaan että
        tuotantotaksoissaan – **olla siinä sitten kilpailukykyinen pohjoissuomalainen**.

        'I feel especially bad for the business people, who will meet the high fees in their expenses
        and in their production fees – **to be there then a competitive northern Finn**.'

        gloss of the target turn:
        olla   siinä   sitten   kilpailukykyinen   pohjoissuomalainen
        be-INF   there   then   competitive   northern.Finn

11.   Keskusteluamme kuitenkin häiritsi tiskillä hihittelevä tyttöpariskunta, jolla näytti olevan
        hillittömän hauskaa. Loimme heihin paheksuvia katseita. **Nauraa nyt julkisella paikalla**.

        'Our conversation was disturbed by a girl couple who were giggling at the bar and seemed
        to have extremely good time. We glanced at them disapprovingly. **To laugh in a public
        place**.'

        gloss of the target turn:
        nauraa   nyt   julkise-lla   paika-lla
        laugh-INF   now   public-ADE   place-ADE

---

[16] When talking about human experience, I refer to the fact that the verbal processes designated by the con-structions are almost always interpreted as indexing human (vs. non-human) experience (no examples such as *To blow so strongly* ('of wind'). In rare cases, the experience of animals can be described ("To be white when the ground is dark" ('of a rabbit'), and in one example, the narrator uses this construction when empathizing with the feelings of forgotten furniture (in Timothy Findley's *Pilgrim*, 1999).

In example (10), the focalizer displays empathy towards people living in northern Finland: THE INF + SIINÄ SITTEN construction is used to describe the impossible situation faced by people living in northern Finland. The construction thus displays empathy from the focalizer's perspective, but the people whose situation is empathized with are the ones described by the infinitive clause ('to be there then'). In example (11), the focalizer criticizes two girls who are laughing too loudly – the ones who laugh ('to laugh in a public place') do not coincide with the one who criticizes them (the focalizer). Neither of the constructions in these examples includes, however, any subject-like member or any other element that could be understood as referring to the speaker-focalizer, nor the human participants involved in the described process.

I suggest that in addition to being interpreted through the focalizer's perspective (see 3.1.), the infinitive constructions open a place for recognizable human experience due to their verb semantics. Verbs activate semantic knowledge about the actor involved, even if this knowledge is not profiled: the verbs *to be* and *to laugh*, for example, include knowledge about their human agent or experiencer. In the words of Langacker (1999: 209), "Relations do not exist independently of their participants. For instance, we cannot actually see an act of breaking if we cannot see the agent and patient, nor can we conceptualize such an act without conceiving of its participants (if only schematically)." I propose that it is this schematic knowledge that makes it possible to search for suitable 'referents' for the processes described by infinitives. These human participants always remain referentially non-specific, but they can simultaneously allow for 'specific' interpretations (e.g., a focalizer in a given context; the northern Finns and the girls in examples 10 and 11).

This non-specific human "reference" potential makes independent A-infinitives resemble Finnish generic person constructions in many ways – they all present generalizations about human experience (see Laitinen 2006). In terms of their semantics, they are especially close to the Finnish zero person construction[17] and often appear together with these constructions (see also Ex. 10, where *että sai vielä tämänkin hetken elää* 'that one could still live this moment' is formed with a zero person construction, followed by an A-infinitive). Zero-persons construe open personal reference (roughly equivalent to the English 'you' and German 'man'), and can be used to offer an open place of experience to the participants of the interaction to recognize and identify with (Laitinen 2006). I suggest that this is what independent A-infinitives do, too, but as they do not include any grammatical element of person reference, they construe their human "reference" potential in a manner distinct from the generic personal constructions. The zero-person constructions differ from independent A-infinitives in that they are finite constructions that have no overt subject and whose predicate appears in the third person singular form (e.g., *Illalla voi mennä ulos,* evening-ADE can-3SG go-A-INF out, 'One can go out in the evening'); the implied non-specific person is thus morphosyntactically present. Infinitives, on the other hand, lack all grounding with respect to the marking of person, and thus, reference. They can activate knowledge about a recognizable human experiencer based on the verb's semantics, but there are no grammatical markers that would encode information about this participant or the relationship of the utterance to the speech event participants.

To show how such infinitival conceptualization can be a useful interactional resource, I analyze its use in an extract that comes from recorded everyday interaction. In this example (12), a couple, Ville and Tanja, have been talking about their neighbor's electric piano playing, and have ended up talking about the benefits of rehearsing with an electric instrument. According to Ville, an

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[17] Grammatically, the zero person constructions have no overt subject, and the predicate verb appears in the third person singular: *Suome-ssa joutu-u sauna-an*, FINLAND-INE GET-3SG SAUNA-ILL, 'In Finland one winds up in a sauna'; *Tänään ei tarkene ilman takki-a,* TODAY NEG.3SG BE.WARM. ENOUGH WITHOUT COAT-PAR, 'Today one will be cold without a coat'. Laitinen 2006: 209.

electric piano does not sound like a real piano when one listens to the music on loudspeakers. Tanja agrees, after which Ville states that, in contrast, one cannot really tell the difference between a real and an electric piano when one hears the music through headphones (lines 1– 2 in the transcript). Tanja acknowledges this mildly with *joo* ('yea', l. 3), and adds that this could be a good incentive for the neighbor to practice wearing headphones:

```
12.     Sg 052

01      Ville: sillon on    tosi paljon tekemi-st   piano-n     kans  ku   se
               then   be-3G very much   do-INF-ELA  piano-GEN   with  when 3SG
               it's a lot like the piano when one/(s)he

02             (.) kuuntelee        kuulokke-i-lla.=
                   listen-3G        headphone-PL-ADE
               (.) uses headphones.=

03      Tanja: =joo:.
                PRT
                =yea:h.

04             (0.7)

05      Tanja: et   siin  on   hyvä porkkana    si-lle     et    tosiaa
               PART there be-3SG good carrot     3SG-ADE    CONJ  really
               so there's a good carrot for that one actually

06             [käyttää     nii-t        kuulokke-i-ta
                use-3SG      those-par    headphone-PL-PAR
               [uses the headphones

07      Ville: [mm.
                PRT
               [mm.

08             (0.7)
```

Tanja then (l. 09) produces an assessment that continues along the line of what she has just stated: playing an electric piano wearing headphones is recommendable because of the quality of the sound ('it's really nice'). After a relatively long pause, she continues with a turn that is built as a contrast (*vaik,* 'although') to what she just said: on the other hand, it is extremely infuriating *if you play wearing headphones and (0.3) to listen then to the thumping of the keyboard* (l. 12-14):

```
09      Tanja: o-n         se    tosi  kiva.
               be-3SG      3SG   really nice
                it's really nice

10             (0.7)

11      Tanja: vaik        se    sit   on-ki (.) suunnattoma    raivostuttava-a
               although    3SG   then  be-CLI (.) extremely      infuriating-PAR
               although it really is then (.) extremely infuriating
```

```
12          jos sä      soita-t      kuulokke-i-lla    tota  ja
            if  you     play-2SG     headphone-PL-ADE  PRT   and
            if you play wearing headphones and

13          (0.3)

14          kuunnella   [sit si-tä   koskettim-i-[en    ään-tä.
            listen-INF  PRT that-PAR keyboard-PL-GEN    sound-PAR
            (to) listen [then to the sound of the keyboard

15   Ville:             [nii no      se     töminä. [mm.
                        PRT  PRT     3SG    thumping PRT
                        yeah right that thumping mm

16          (1.6)

17   Tanja: *et   se   o    sitte ihan   tyhmä-ä*.
            PRT   3SG  be   then  really stupid-PAR
            that's then actually quite stupid
```

In the beginning of l. 11, Tanja uses the generic zero person construction *vaik se sit onki suunnat-toma raivostuttavaa* ('it really is then extremely infuriating [for anyone]'), which is followed by an *if*-clause where Tanja uses the pronoun *you* ('if you play wearing the headphones'). *You* can be interpreted as a generic second person, but in this context – Ville often rehearses at home – it is easily interpreted as referring to him. After a 0.3 second pause, Tanja continues with an A-infinitive clause that is produced prosodically as an independent unit: *(to) listen then to the sound of the keyboard.* Here, the A-infinitive clause can be tied grammatically back to the turn *although it really is then (.) extremely infuriating (…) to listen then to the sound of the keyboard*. Prosodically, however, Tanja's turn (l. 14) starts a new intonation unit. By choosing an infinitival pattern of conceptualization, Tanja can ensure that her assessment is interpreted as being about anyone. Unlike the ambivalent *you* (line 18), the infinitival description (*to listen to…*) is offered as being annoying to anyone.

By using the infinitive construction, Tanja invites Ville to recognize and affiliate with her position, and this is indeed what he reflects and orients to in his following turn (l. 15, 'yeah right that thumping').[18] Furthermore, the infinitive construction presents a generalization about anyone in a context in which the displayed criticism could be slightly problematic from Ville's perspective. As a conceptualization, *(to) listen then to the sound of the keyboard* presents a generalization about anyone, depicting a process type that is understood as being displayed in negative light. However, if we consider the relationship of the participants, and the fact that Tanja often hears Ville rehearse, the assessment on lines 17 and 18 (*although it's then (.) extremely infuriating if you play with the headphones*) might be in danger of being interpreted with respect to the participants present (the zero potentially referring to Tanja and the 2nd person pronoun to Ville). By using an infinitive construction, the micro-organization of the situation is reorganized in the sense that the perspective is

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[18] Ville comes in and starts producing a turn that shows agreement (*yeah right that thumping*) directly after Tanja begins the infinitival clause. Including an assessment in a description ensures the recipient's immediate, typically affective response, usually reflecting the tone of the previous turn (e.g., Goodwin & Goodwin 1992: 157). As Tanja has given no grounds for her argument when Ville starts his turn, he explicates the statement he is agreeing to and displays his own knowledge about the matter in question (cf. Sorjonen 2001: 183). He thus shows that he has positioned himself as a listener to someone playing the electric piano with headphones.

human-centered, the focus being on the LISTENER, but the utterance is conceptualized in a maximally non-specific way.

As their reference is not restricted by any lexico-grammatical means, independent infinitives can thus be said to construe human reference in a maximally open way. They do not "lack" person reference in the sense that a missing element would need to be recovered from the context. Rather, they offer the participants a way in which to conceptualize states of affairs in a de-individualized way. A-infinitive constructions can simultaneously be highly personal – expressing the speakers' own factual experiences and their affective involvement – but since they are ungrounded and do not refer, they leave the interpretations multiple and open. This factor makes them advantageous in inviting other participants to recognize the described process and the affect associated with it.

3.2 Construing temporal ungroundedness and non-factual modality

Independent A-infinitive constructions are conceptualized openly not only with respect to participants but also with respect to temporal and modal relations: they are not specified with respect to these categories and therefore, leave the interpretation open.

According to Langacker (1987: 251), an infinitive (e.g. *to run*) profiles the same sequence of relational configurations as the verb functioning as its lexical base (*run*), but construes it by means of a complex atemporal gestalt: it converts the processual predication of the verb stem into an atemporal relation, with respect to the time line. A relation is thus atemporal in the sense that the conceptualizer activates the successive phases of the process as a simultaneously available whole rather than following its evolution through time state by state.

Infinitives that function as complements of finite verbs are used as elements of temporally positive processes, that is, interconnected configurations of relations whose evolution through time is central (Langacker 1987: 244), despite being atemporal themselves (e.g., Langacker 1987: 247–248; 1999: 223, 362). In independent contexts of use, on the other hand, their atemporal profile forms the temporal core of the utterance. In this way, their atemporality becomes a resource of conceptualization: processes can be described in a manner in which they remain temporally ungrounded, leaving the relationship of the narrated event and the speech event unmarked. As the only framework of interpretation is the indexical progression of the speech event – the described process type is not situated with respect to the speech event or any past or future events –, the atemporal process can only be interpreted against the temporal origo of the speech situation (see also Lyons 1977: 685).

A similar semantic effect is created by the lack of modal marking. As discussed in the introduction of this paper, the meaning of A-infinitives is "theoretical" (Leech 1987: 114). In the context of a clause, a finite verb can ground the A-infinitive in terms of factuality, but when A-infinitives are used as such, their meaning remains inherently theoretical. For such construal, it is irrelevant whether independent A-infinitives depict factual events – as they often do, being typically used in contexts in which speakers talk about specific, time-bound events. When seen through the A-infinitive's lens, actual, past or potential events are construed as ideas that have no temporal or modal grounding, which enhances the recognizability of the description. Consequently, they posit no distinctions with respect to the dimensions of involvement, epistemicity or knowledge: anyone who can recognize the type of process being talked about can identify with it.

Another aspect of the intersubjective potential of the "theoretical" nature of independent in-

finitives it that they afford the participants with a conceptualization resource with which to comment on others' experiences without directly entering them (cf. Heritage 2011). This is illustrated in example (13). Pirjo has been telling a story about a group of Finns she witnessed buying cheap food in Sweden, and the interactants have displayed mutually shared negative affect towards the described actions, buying food just to carry it back to Finland. In lines 2 and 3, Jonna produces a negative assessment *mä en tajuu mä en jaksais hei ikinä* ('I don't understand, I wouldn't have the energy like ever'), after which Anu joins in by producing another negative assessment in the form of an infinitive clause *ja raahata jostai* ('and to drag from somewhere).

13.

```
01 Pirjo:   [kyl se semmo-st se[ittemääsata-a   oli   melkei jokaise-l
            sure it  kindof-PAR sevenhundred-PAR was  almost  everyone-ADE
            it really was something like seven hundred for each of them

02 Jonna:   [MÄ E-N       TAJU-U      MÄ  E-N     JA:KSA-IS          HEI
            I  NEG-1SG     understand  I   NEG-1SG be.able.to-COND    hey
            I don't understand I wouldn't have the energy like

03          IKI:NÄ?[:
             ever
             ever

04 Anu:             [ja   raahata     jostai,=
            and  drag-INF    some-ELA
             and to drag from somewhere

05 Jonna:   [nii:i
             yeah

06 Ulla:    [nii:i
             PRT
             yeah
```

In this extract, Pirjo has described a specific event that she experienced, and Jonna has evaluated her story generalizing to some degree but referring specifically to herself: she has hard time relating to the people described, because she could not imagine doing a similar thing (*I don't understand I wouldn't have the energy like ever*, lines 02–03). On line 4, Anu takes the generalization a step further: with her turn *and to drag from somewhere* she makes the point that not only in this case but in any similar situation such an action would be ridiculous. In doing so, she conceptualizes her turn as recognizable to the other participants, and the construction is indeed immediately followed by two two-peaked *nii:i*s, a response particle that Sorjonen (2001: 133–140) has shown to display the recipient's strong affiliation with the speaker's point of view. By virtue of not being specified with respect to participants, time and modality, the independent infinitive construction can in this way not only be used in "expressing" affect, but in inviting shared understandings of the evaluated situations. What is more, Anu's turn displays negative attitude towards an event of which she has no first-hand experience. By using an infinitival construction, she can stay on focal elements of Pirjo's story and present her own assessment in a de-particularized manner, without attempting to enter directly into Pirjo's experience (see Heritage 2011). In this way, she can present a critical assessment of a type of process that she finds ridiculous, rather than something that she has directly experienced (cf. Heritage 2011; Goodwin and Goodwin 1992: 165, 182).

4 Conclusions

In this paper, I have combined the tools of CG and CA to show how the affective and intersubjective work done with independent infinitives can be explained by carefully exploring the infinitives' own semantic nature: they build grammatically ungrounded conceptualizations with which the speakers can turn their own experiences and assessments into departicularized, theoretical descriptions that remain open for anyone to recognize. This framework does not require the assumption that such interpersonal functions arise from an implied propositional attitude that is left implicit (Evans and Watanabe 2016: 31; Verstraete and D'Hertefeldt 2016), or from a finite clause attestable in the previous context (see Evans and Watanabe 2016: 26–30); neither does one need to assume a diachronic conventionalization process where a finite verb has ellipted (Evans 2007, Evans and Watanabe 2016). On the contrary, as I hope to have shown, the morphological unmarkedness of infinitives is actually an asset; the very fact that A-infinitives are not grounded imprints their nature as grammatical conceptualizations and motivates their functions in written and spoken interaction.

I have analyzed the ways in which infinitive constructions are interpreted against the indexical background of the ongoing activity and suggested how the unmarkedness of the categories typical for Finnish finite verbs provides the speakers and writers with a conceptualization resource that is distinct from finite-verb based predications. On one hand, I have discussed the ways in which the unmarkedness of the categories person, tense and mood make the described states of affairs maximally subjective (with respect to the ground) and how this fact makes these construction function as indexes of the ongoing, affective activity. On the other hand, I have also shown how this very same conceptualization – a mere process type expressed by the infinitival clause – construes the process in a manner that makes the described states of affairs recognizable to the other participants. I have also stressed the intersubjective affordances of such conceptualization. With independent infinitive constructions, the speakers or writers can make their own experiences or thoughts recognizable to others. Seen from a different angle, infinitival constructions seem to afford interactants access to matters that were not factually within their own realm of experience; in this way, affective comments could be presented that are not directly about the world and its participants as such but, more, about "how the world is made" (cf. Langacker, 1999).

Evans (2007) made the initial suggestion that the pragmatic functions of insubordinate constructions could be divided into three main types: those of 1) indirection and interpersonal control (e.g. imperatives, hints, requests), 2) modalizing (in addition to epistemic and deontic functions, this includes e.g. the exclamation and evaluation categories), and 3) signaling presupposed material ("signaling relatively specific presuppositions about the discourse context in which the sentence can occur"). Many aspects of the Finnish A-infinitives fit this typology well. They are also used in exclamative and evaluative functions (see also Mithun 2016, Verstraete and D'Hertefeldt 2016), they typically have responsive functions, and, all in all, they are deeply oriented to interpersonal semantics. However, whereas Evans (2007) suggests that one motivation for the use of insubordinate constructions is to detach oneself from the propositional content of the utterance (in the spirit of avoiding face-threatening acts), I propose a different interpretation for the Finnish A-infinitives. The studied constructions are indeed used to describe matters in a non-factual, type-like theoretical manner, leaving the reference and temporal and modal relations unmarked, but my data revealed that this is not an interactional practice motivated by questions of face or avoidance. On the contrary, at

least in Finnish, independent A-infinitive constructions are used in contexts that suggest strong intersubjective involvement: the referentially open, theoretical, atemporal construal of events invites the participants to recognize and participate in the shared evaluations of affect and events.

Acknowledgements

A.1. Transcription symbols

.	falling intonation
,	level intonation
?	rising intonation
><	talk inside is faster than the surrounding talk
<>	talk inside is slower than the surrounding talk
:	lengthening of the sound (e.g. joo:::)
JOO	capital letters: louder talk than the surrounding talk
£	smiley voice
#	creaky voice
(h)	h in brackets within a word that indicates aspiration, often laughter
h	the letter h (or several of them): audible aspiration
.h	period + the letter h (or several of them): audible inhalation
.joo	a period in front of a word: the word is said with an inbreath
<	at the end of a word: the word is finished abruptly; glottal stop
mi-	dash indicates a cut-off of a word
[	utterances began simultaneously
]	point where overlapping talk stops
=	no silence between two adjacent utterances
(.)	micropause (0.2 seconds or less)
(0.5)	silences timed in tenth of a second

A.2. Glossing

When analyzing the Finnish data, I used the standard abbreviations of the Leipzig Glossing Rules (https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf). The relevant abbreviations in this article are as follows:

Nominal markings

abl	ablative
acc	accusative
ade	adessive
gen	genitive
ela	elative
ess	essive
ill	illative
ine	inessive
par	partitive
tra	translative
pl	plural

Verbal markings

A-inf   A-infinitive
MA-infMA-infinitive
1sg   first person singular
3sg   third person singular
pst   past
imp   imperative mood
neg   negation
ptcl   participle
cond   conditional

Other

cli   clitic
prt   particle
q   question particle
dem   demonstrative pronoun
conj   conjunction
poss   possessive suffix

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