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The Finnish Colorative Construction and Expressivity

Abstract

This paper examines the Finnish verbal expression called the colorative construction (CC). In the CC there are two verbs: a neutral infinitive verb and a finite verb which dramatizes or specifies the denotative meaning. The construction fulfils stylistic and aesthetic functions. Syntactically the CC is not fundamentally different from other infinitive clause types, but certain pragmatic restrictions regulate its usage. The difference between finite verbs in the CC and in other infinitive clauses is particularly important. While, to some extent, finite verbs in the CC fit into theories of descriptive words or ideophones in different languages, not all of them are indisputably ideophones. Nevertheless, they all have potential for expressivity, which is further emphasized by the syntactic construction. However, syntax alone cannot uphold that expressivity, since the CC cannot be formed with any verb. Rather, syntax and semantics are in close interaction, together reinforcing the expressivity of the construction.

1. Introduction

“The people on the bus go up and down, up and down, up and down.
The people on the bus go up and down all through the town.”

“Ihmiset ajella hytkytti, hytkytti, hytkytti.
Ihmiset ajella hytkytti koko päivän.”

English trad. transl. by J.S.¹

In this paper we aim to examine the Finnish verb phrase type called **colorative construction** (CC).² The Finnish equivalent for the term (*koloratiivinen konstruktio*) was established by Ahti Rytönen (1937). The

¹ Pseudonym J.S., an early childhood pedagogue, translated the popular English children’s rhyme “The Wheels of the Bus” and taught it on a music course at Orivesi Folk High School in the 1980s (Perkiö and Huovi 2006: 139).

² We would like to thank the anonymous referees of the SKY Journal of Linguistics for their invaluable comments on a previous draft of this article. The writers alone remain responsible for any remaining shortcomings, omissions or errors. Special thanks are due to Eleanor Underwood (Department of Languages, University of Jyväskylä) for help in checking the language.

corpus used in this paper is taken from the Finnish Syntax Archive at the University of Turku, which was collected from Finnish spoken dialects (see section 3). As the word ‘colorative’ suggests, the CC not only has a denotative meaning, but also a special descriptive or expressive force. Grammatically, the CC is parallel to other infinitive clauses, but the semantic relation between its non-finite and its finite verb is, rather, more typical of adverbial clauses. It has also been compared with serial verb constructions. Furthermore, finite verbs in the CC have certain features characteristic of ‘descriptive’ words or ‘ideophones’ (see Rytönen 1937: 103; Jarva 2003: 76–77); in this paper, the term ‘ideophone’ is used. We shall suggest that the syntactic, pragmatic and semantic factors are concurrent and that they reinforce the expressive force of the CC. By deploying the CC, a speaker can dramatize and simulate actions, while the construction also fulfils stylistic and aesthetic functions. This is seen in the Finnish translation above, where the colorative construction *ihmiset ajella hytkytti* creates an image of people shaking and bouncing up and down on the bus.

The aims of this article are 1) to examine the different factors which affect this expressive force and 2) to define the relationship between the CC, other infinitive clauses and serial verb constructions. The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 introduces the typical features of the CC in general and compares them with the concept of serial verb construction. Section 3 gives an overview of the corpus. In section 4 the CC is compared with other infinitive clauses, and word order and cohesion are discussed as possible criteria for classification. Pragmatic restrictions connected with tense, person, and mood, as well as with negation and interrogation, are discussed in section 5. Semantic analysis follows in section 6, which focuses on three components of the CC: neutral verbs, subjects, and colorative verbs. In the concluding section 7 the CC is compared with other syntactical constructions in which ideophones are used in different languages. Finally, we attempt to sketch out some factors which may explain how the CC has developed.

2. The colorative construction and serial verb constructions

In the CC there are two verbs: a non-finite and a finite verb. Of the four Finnish infinitives, only one can be used in the CC. This infinitive is also the dictionary form of the verb, and it is called the First Infinitive (e.g. Karlsson 1987: 53–55, 156), or the A infinitive (ISK 2004: 490). In this

paper, the latter term is used. The capital letter A stands for the infinitive suffixes *-a* and *-ä*; the choice is dictated by vowel harmony, as in *kaatu-a* ‘to fall’ and *yrittä-ä* ‘to try.’ In the CC the infinitive is a relatively neutral verb with a denotative meaning and usually a fairly close semantic equivalent in English; see *koatuat* ‘to fall’ in example (1).

The finite verb in the CC dramatizes or specifies the denotative meaning of the infinitive. We shall here call it the **colorative verb**. The expressivity of colorative verbs is not unlike that of ideophones. For example, Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz (2001: 3) point out that “[I]deophones and similar words have a special dramaturgic function... [they] simulate an event, an emotion, a perception through language.” Colorative verbs are highly context-specific, and particularly difficult, if not impossible, to translate literally into other languages; the same holds true for ideophones (c.f. Msimang and Poulos 2001: 235; Watson 2001: 394; Jarva 2003: 75–76). Thus, colorative verbs are just marked with COL in our glosses and -COL in the English translations below. In example (1) *tupsahi* is a colorative verb which might evoke a slightly humorous impression of the speaker tumbling deep in the snow, softly, unexpectedly and suddenly, perhaps with a faint sound.

- (1) *mie sinnel lummee koatuat tupsahi* (LA, Mikkeli)³
 I there snow-ILL fall-INF COL-PAST-1SG
 ‘I fell-COL in the snow’

The construction with an infinitive has no known equivalents in Indo-European languages or even Finno-Ugric languages, except for Balto-Finnic languages, which are closely related to Finnish, such as Estonian (EKG 1993: 246) and Veps (Kettunen 1943: 153–160). However, the CC also has a variant where both verbs are in the finite form (called here a “two-finite variant,” whereas the variant with an infinitive is called an “infinitive variant”). It can be illustrated by modifying the first example:

³ The corpus examples are dialectal and may differ considerably from written Standard Finnish; in Standard Finnish example (1) would be, *minä sinne lumeen kaatua tupsahdin*. The corpus examples are referred to with the abbreviation LA (= Lauseopin arkisto, Syntax Archive) and the name of the village where the example was recorded. All the examples without references are invented or constructed by the authors.

- (2) *minä sinne lumeen kaaduin tupsahdin*
 I there snow-ILL fall-PAST-1SG COL-PAST-1SG
 ‘I fell-COL in the snow’

The two-finite variant has equivalents also in Sami languages and Hungarian (see Ojutkangas 1998: 116). In the literature the infinitive and two-finite variants of CC are usually introduced together (e.g. ISK 2004: 443). According to Ojutkangas (1998: 117), it is “unnecessary” from a semantic point of view to differentiate between them, and “in principle” both verbs in the CC could be in the finite form; Rytönen called these two variants “completely synonymous” (1937: 102). The two-finite variant is also acceptable in the standard language. However, this study focuses on the infinitive variant, because there are no examples of the two-finite variant in our corpus.

It is hard to find in English, at least in its best-known (“standard”) variants, verb phrases syntactically equivalent to the colorative construction. However, similar ideas and connotations can certainly be expressed by other means in English; for example, verb phrase + adverb phrase, verb phrase + prepositional phrase, phrasal verbs, prepositional verbs, idioms, etc. (see also our suggested translations of the examples). Anttila (1977: 30) gives English translations for some CC’s, e.g. *laulaa hoilottaa* ‘sing loudly and ungracefully,’ *veistää nutustaa* ‘carve ahead slowly and gradually;’ there are also two English translations in Jarva (2003: 166): *juosta jolkottaa* ‘to run slowly, at a jog-trot’ and *tulla kempuroida* ‘to come limping, with stiff legs.’

There seems to be a contradiction between syntax and semantics, as syntactically the finite verb functions as the predicator, but in the CC the finite verb is the colorative one, functioning semantically rather like an adverb phrase for a neutral verb. It is not surprising, therefore, that syntactically the CC has been interpreted in different ways. Anttila (1977: 30) calls infinitives “object verbs.” In this he follows the traditional explanation that an A infinitive is either the subject or the object of a finite main verb. Ambiguously, Anttila calls colorative verbs “adverbial auxiliaries;” thus, he leaves unclear which verb is the predicator. In the Finnish Syntax Archive at the University of Turku (Lauseopin arkisto), from which our corpus is collected, A infinitives are coded as adverbials of colorative verbs. Also the most recent Finnish grammar (ISK 2004: 443) regards the colorative verb as the main verb, although in the CC there is a “multi-verb predicator.” Hakulinen and Karlsson (1979: 234), however,

regard the infinitive in the CC as the main verb “defined” by the colorative verb.

In her study of asyndetic verbal expressions in Finno-Ugric languages, Ojutkangas (1998: 115–117) regards the CC as a serial verb, or “serial verb-like,” construction. Serial verb constructions are known in many languages, especially in Australia, South-West Asia and Africa; best-known examples are from Kalam and Yoruba (see Foley and Olson 1985, Givón 1991, Itkonen 1997). There are several definitions of a serial verb construction; in general it can be stated that it comprises two or more verbs which are “merely juxtaposed, with no intervening conjunctions” (Foley and Olson 1985: 18). Typically verbs in such a construction share a subject and other core arguments, and they tend to be in the same tense and mood (Foley and Olson 1985: 22–25). The verbs can also function independently as the predicator of a simple clause, and they retain their lexical meaning when serialized (Itkonen 1997: 235–236). However, it is not possible to define a separate meaning for any of the single verbs in a serial verb construction; as Givón (1991: 81, 84; see also Ojutkangas 1998: 110) puts it, the construction codes “a simple single event,” or “an event/state that one language codes with a simple clause with a simple verb.”

The two-finite variant of the CC (*kaaduin tupsahdin*) meets the definitions above quite well: the verbs are both in the same tense and mood, and they have the same subject. Moreover, they quite clearly code a single event (cf. Ojutkangas 1998: 114). (Nonetheless, there are certain problems in defining a “single event,” see Givón 1991: 84.) As mentioned above, such parallel ideas are usually expressed with one (sometimes phrasal) verb in English. It is also possible that a colorative verb functions as a predicator in a simple clause. In many cases, however, they are so context-specific that it is questionable if they have any “lexical” meaning at all. For example, if the neutral verb is omitted in example (1), the result is grammatically correct but the meaning becomes rather unclear and almost impossible to translate—even when it can be deduced from the context:

- (3) *minä sinne lumeen tupsahdin*
 I there snow-ILL COL-PAST-1SG
 ‘I ???-ED in the snow’

In any case, some colorative verbs can be used elsewhere than in a CC without difficulty. They stand alone without another, more neutral verb, and their meaning is rather stable, although they usually have an expressive

function. However, the CC enhances their expressivity, and the neutral verb in the CC modifies their meaning. The problematics of the independent meaning of colorative verbs are further discussed in section 6.2.

Although in the two-finite variant of CC both verbs have the same tense and mood, the non-finite variant does not meet the criteria of a typical serial verb construction. The question of common arguments is also problematic to some extent, even if the A infinitive and the finite verb share the same subject (ISK 2004: 497–498); this interpretation is plausible as long as there is only one subject in the clause. But if the A infinitive is regarded as the object for the finite verb, any other object or adverbial should be regarded as an argument for that A infinitive, not for the finite verb. Ojutkangas (1998: 117) evades the problem by stating that there is no semantic difference between the two-finite and non-finite variants of the CC. This broad generalization is acceptable in her study, since she examines several asyndetic verbal expressions in many different Finno-Ugric languages. In this study, however, we shall not combine the two variants of the CC, because the two-finite variant is marginal in the corpus used.

Apart from the usage of the infinitive, there is a bigger difference between the function of the CC and that of serial verbal constructions. Ojutkangas (1998: 116) states that in the CC, verb serialization is deployed to specify meaning. This does not fit with the most common functions of serial verb constructions introduced by Givón (1991: 82–83): these are case-role marking, verb co-lexicalization, deictic-directional marking, tense-aspect marking, and evidentiality and epistemic marking. There is no colorative or expressive, and not even a specifying function in Givón’s typology. In some cases, the CC could be approximated with verb co-lexicalization, when “two or more verb-stems are co-lexicalized to create a more complex verbal concept” (Givón 1991: 82). In example (4), it could be said that the CC creates “a more complex verbal concept,” something translatable as ‘eat a lot, eat greedily, avidly.’

- (4) *siellä sitä sitte syvväm mekotettiin* (LA, Multia)
 there PRT then eat-INF COL-PAST-PASS
 ‘then we were eating-COL there [= at hay making]’

But there is still a substantial difference between this kind of expressive verbal concept and those mentioned by Givón, as in the following example:

- (5) *she eat-perceive the meat* (Givón 1991: 82)
 ‘she tasted the meat’

Thus, in conclusion it must be said that the CC differs quite remarkably from typical serial verb constructions. It is true that the verbs share their core arguments in the CC, as they typically also do in a serial verb construction. However, the CC can also be compared with other infinitive clauses, where an infinitive could be regarded as the complement of a finite verb (see section 4). If this is the case, it cannot be said that the verbs share, for example, an object. In terms of clausehood, the CC does not differ from other infinitive clauses, whilst serial verb constructions are rather exceptional intermediate forms between simple and compound clauses. The functions of typical serial verb constructions and the CC are essentially different. In this respect, the CC has much more in common with adverbial clauses. Interestingly, in many languages around the world, ideophones are quite commonly regarded as adverbs (e.g. de Jong 2001: 130; Nuckolls 2001: 274–275; Schaefer 2001).

3. The corpus

The corpus of this paper is collected from the Finnish Syntax Archive at the University of Turku (Lauseopin arkisto). The archive is coded morphologically and syntactically, and it constitutes an XML database, in which specific sets of data can be searched by xpath 1.0 expressions. It has in total 132 samples of spoken Finnish dialects from different villages, each sample comprising 6000–8000 words of text (approximately one hour in speech). The samples represent the variety of Finnish dialects reasonably well: there are samples from 15 to 30 villages from every main dialect area. The number of informants is 153 (77 women and 76 men). Since the informants are supposed to be speakers of ‘genuine’ Finnish dialects, old people were preferred by the compilers. Most (96%) of the informants were born in the late nineteenth century (from the 1870s to the 1890s), and they were typically in their eighties or nineties when recorded. The recordings were mainly done in the 1960s. (See Lauseopin arkisto for further details in Finnish.)

The informants were interviewed by a researcher asking questions such as “how did you thresh the corn in the old days” or “tell everything about wolf hunting.” The most common register is therefore narration in

the past tense. Fluent and talkative informants were preferred by the compilers. In a few cases two dialect speakers converse with each other.

It was not easy to gather all the colorative constructions of this huge archive, because they are not coded separately.⁴ Their A infinitive is coded as an adverbial, but so are A infinitives in some other verbal expressions and in incomplete or misconstrued clauses, too. When all sentences with an A infinitive coded as an adverbial were searched for, 277 hits were obtained. From this raw data all the CC's were separated manually. In the final corpus there are 85 colorative constructions from 40 samples. Word order in the CC can vary in different dialects, as in example (6), although the order finite + infinitive is not possible in Standard Finnish. In the corpus, 20% of the examples (17/85) are of this type.

- (6) *susi lotkotti mennä erellä* (LA, Renko)
 wolf COL-PAST-3SG go-INF ahead
 'the wolf went-COL ahead'

In order to find two-finite variants of the CC (cf. example (2)), all clauses with two finite verbs were searched for. Quite surprisingly, no CC's were found in the search; in most of the hits the same verb was uttered twice in emphatic or fragmentary clauses. Thus, there are no two-finite variants in the corpus. This does not mean that the two-finite variant does not exist in Finnish dialects as there are several plausible mentions of it in the literature (see examples in Jarva 2003: 77). Either the two-finite variant is so infrequent that there are no examples of it in LA, or the different search criteria used just did not match the codification of the LA. It is possible that two-finite variants of the CC are interpreted as consisting of two clauses, as the main principle in the coding process was that "in general, there is one finite predicator in every clause" (Ikola et al. 1989: 27).

The corpus in this study is slightly smaller than in Ikola et al. (1989: 303–308), who claim that there are 90 CC's in the archive. The difference can be explained by different search criteria, and perhaps also by our more critical elimination of false or questionable hits. Unlike the entire archive, our reduced corpus does not represent all Finnish dialects equally. The CC appears to be most common in Eastern and Central Finland and to occur rarely in Southern Finland and Lapland. (See the map in Ikola et al. 1989:

⁴ We would like to thank the staff of the Lauseopin Arkisto for their help; special thanks go to trainee Katariina Jalonen and special researcher Nobufumi Inaba.

306.) In most samples there are just one or two hits, but one sample has no less than nine. That sample is from Nilsiä, in Eastern Finland about 50 kilometres north-east of the city of Kuopio. The dialects of that area are reported to be rich in ideophones (see e.g. Anttila 1977: 30; Jarva 2003: 76).

Of course, the distribution of the hits is also dependent on the speakers' stylistic repertoires and attitudes; as Ikola et al. put it (1989: 305), the speaker using the CC "has apparently moved into a somewhat more casual style of narration." Similarly, Kilian-Hatz (2001: 156) claims that "ideophones are part of an informal language register, and their function is to dramatize a narration." Presumably the interview situation, more or less formal, sets constraints to both the frequency and variation of the CC. Therefore, we included in this study also Luttinen's (2000) corpus of more than 80 examples of the CC from free speech collected for her MA thesis.

4. CC and other infinitive clauses

An infinitive and a finite verb occur together in many Finnish sentences, not only in the CC. Hereafter we call them simply "other infinitive clauses," although the term is slightly inaccurate. Firstly, an A infinitive (or an infinitive phrase) can be seen as the complement of a finite main verb; particularly an object. Secondly, an A infinitive and a finite verb can form a verb chain.

So, in the following example, the infinitive phrase [*opiskella saksaa*] 'to study German' is the object for the finite verb *haluaisin* 'I would like.'

- (7) *minä haluaisin opiskella saksaa* (ISK 2004: 494)
 I want-COND-1SG study-INF German-PART
 'I would like to study German'

There is a multitude of Finnish verbs with A infinitive as their complement, e.g. *jaksaa* 'can, be able, bother,' *muistaa* 'remember,' *osata* 'can, be able, know how,' *uskaltaa* 'dare,' *viitsii* 'bother' and *yrittää* 'try' (Vilkuna 1996: 267). Their English equivalents are usually followed by the infinitive marker *to* and infinitive, except for auxiliaries (e.g. *can*, *may*). However, English makes use of the marker *to* also in sentences where Finnish prefers another infinitive or a nominal phrase, e.g. the MA infinitive phrase [*opiskeleMAan saksaa*] 'to study German' in the following example (ISK

2004: 491–492; cf. 3rd infinitive; Karlsson 1987: 160–163). In Finnish, MA infinitive phrases like this are not considered objects, but adverbials.

- (8) *minä jouduin opiskelemaan saksaa*
 I have-to-PAST-1SG study-MAINF German-PART
 ‘I had to study German’

The most recent Finnish grammar (ISK 2004: 493–495) distinguishes between verbs with an A infinitive as their complement and verbs forming a verb chain with an A infinitive. In the latter group there are “modal or other abstract” verbs such as *alkaa* ‘begin, start,’ *meinata* ‘mean, intend; tend,’ *saada* ‘can, may, be allowed,’ *tahtoa* ‘want; tend,’ *taitaa* ‘seem; think; be going’ and *voida* ‘can, be able.’ In Finnish dialects the most frequent verbs occurring with an A infinitive are from this group (see the statistics in Ikola et al. 1989: 286). They are, to some extent, parallel to the English modal auxiliaries *can, may, etc.* Thus, in the next example the finite verb and the infinitive belong to the same verb chain [*voisin opiskella*] ‘I could study,’ which is the predicator, and *saksaa* ‘German’ is its object.

- (9) *minä voisin opiskella saksaa* (ISK 2004: 494)
 I can-COND-1SG study-INF German-PART
 ‘I could study German’

The question is: is it then possible to distinguish the CC formally from other infinitive clauses, or should an A infinitive in a CC be interpreted as the complement of a main verb, or as a part of the verb chain just as in examples (7) and (9)? According to ISK (2004: 442–443), verb chains and the CC are different constructions, albeit similar in the sense that both have a predicator that consists of two or more verbs. However, the grammar does not state explicitly how to formally distinguish these two. Here we will look more closely at two possible criteria: word order and cohesion.

4.1 Word order

At first glance, word order seems to be different in the CC from other combinations of A infinitive and finite verb. In a typical CC, the infinitive goes before the finite verb (10), whereas in other infinitive clauses it

typically follows the finite verb (11). “The order is thus OV vs. the VO normal in the rest of Finnish syntax” (Anttila 1977: 30).

(10) *minä männäh hilasin seq oja ylite* (LA, Rautalampi)
 I go-INF COL-PAST-1SG that-GEN ditch-GEN across
 ‘I went-COL across that ditch’

(11) *minä tahdoin mennä sen ojan ylitse*
 I want-PAST-1SG go-INF that-GEN ditch-GEN across
 ‘I wanted to go across that ditch’

However, this is not an absolute criterion, because word order in Finnish is grammatically free, but textually conditioned; Vilkuna (1989: 9) calls it “discourse-conditioned.” Accordingly, when analyzing separate clauses it is very often possible to imagine some context in which a particular word order would be acceptable. Since Finnish is principally an SVO language, the word order finite + infinitive can be seen as neutral or unmarked. However, it is not difficult to find clauses where the verbs are in the opposite order, i.e. an infinitive coming before a finite verb; see the following examples (12) and (13):

(12) *pakastaa voi kaikkia marjoja* (Vilkuna 1989: 136, 241)
 freeze-INF can-3SG all-PL-PART berry-PL-PART
 ‘you can freeze all kinds of berries’

(13) *e kylä lainka mens saa* (LA, Karjala TI)
 no place-to-visit-ILL at-all go-INF may-3SG
 ‘you are not allowed at all to go for a visit’

As mentioned above (see example (6)), the word order in the CC can vary, and 20% of the examples in the corpus have the order finite + infinitive. In such cases the word order is similar in the CC and other infinitive clauses:

(6’) *susi lotkotti mennä erellä* (LA, Renko)
 ‘the wolf went-COL ahead’

(11’) *minä tahdoin mennä sen ojan ylitse*
 ‘I wanted to go across that ditch’

Thus, even if the word order of a typical CC distinguishes it from other infinitive clauses, exceptions are so frequent that word order cannot be held as an absolute criterion.

4.2 Cohesion and complements

A possibly more significant difference is the cohesion of the CC; i.e. in Standard Finnish it is impossible to put any constituent between the verbs (ISK 2004: 443). So, in example (1) *minä sinne lumeen kaatua tupsahdin* there are three constituents: the pronoun *minä* ‘I,’ the adverbial/noun phrase⁵ *sinne lumeen* ‘in the snow,’ and the colorative construction *kaatua tupsahdin*. The order of the constituents could vary to some extent. While the relatively cohesive phrase *sinne lumeen* can be split (*sinne minä kaatua tupsahdin lumeen*), the CC cannot: **minä kaatua sinne lumeen tupsahdin* is not grammatical. With other infinitive clauses the split is possible, even frequent:

- (14) *jos hää tahto meitä auttaa* (LA, Koivisto)
 if she want-PAST-3SG we-PART help-INF
 ‘if she wanted to help us’

- (15) *kyl mäi ny lukkees sentään tavalisest ossaa* (LA, Koski TI)
 yes I PRT read-INF at-least normally can-1SG
 ‘well, at least I can read normally’

In compound tenses (perfect and pluperfect, see e.g. Karlsson 1987: 133–137; ISK 1994: 139–140) an auxiliary (*olla* ‘to be, to have’) prototypically occurs immediately before the other verbs of the CC (cf. example (16)).

- (16) *se oli nukkuak kahottanus sitte se mummu*
 she have-PAST-3SG sleep-INF COL-PTCP then that old-lady
 ‘then the old lady had slept-COL’ (LA, Haapajärvi)

There may be some constituents between the auxiliary and the other verbs, as *sillonki vähä* ‘then a little’ in the following example (17):

⁵ It is a matter of taste whether one regards *sinne* ‘there’ as the head of an adverb phrase, or *lumeen* ‘in the snow’ as the head of a noun phrase. In any case, *sinne lumeen* ‘there in the snow’ constitutes a relatively cohesive phrase that expresses direction.

- (17) *se ol sillonki vähä suuttuva tuhahtana*
 he have-PAST-3SG then-AFFX a-little get-angry-INF COL-PTCP
 ‘he had got a little angry-COL then, too’ (LA, Laukaa)

However, an auxiliary cannot come between an infinitive and a finite verb in the CC; it is not grammatical to say, for instance, **se nukkua oli kahottanut*. Nevertheless, a parallel word order is acceptable in other infinitive clauses:

- (18) *jos vaan olis savunkiv vetänyin niin kyllä*
 if only have-COND-3SG smoke-GEN-AFFX inhale-PTCP so PRT
jatkaa olis täytyny (LA, Kuru)
 continue-INF have-COND-3SG have-to-PTCP
 ‘if you had taken just one puff, you would have had to continue [smoking] for sure’

The continuity of the CC seems to be obligatory in Standard Finnish and also in the dialects as long as the word order is infinitive + finite verb. However, when a finite verb precedes an infinitive, the CC can be split. In the following example (19) the object *ne laovat* ‘the boards’ comes between the verbs. The CC with this “inverted” word order appears to be significantly less coherent, as there is some kind of constituent between the verbs in as many as 7 cases out of 17.

- (19) *nythän ne koneet ... hylykyttellöö ne laovat tehä*
 now-AFFX these machine-PL COL-3SG these board-PL make-INF
 ‘now(adays) the boards are made-COL by them machines’ (LA, Nilsjä)

The cohesion of the CC, i.e. the firm connection between the verbs, apparently prevents it from having any infinitive complements itself. There are no examples in our corpus, although there are some verbs in the CC’s that could otherwise have one. Interestingly, they could only have an MA infinitive as a complement; there are no neutral verbs in the corpus that could have an A infinitive as a complement. In example (11’) the verb *mennä* ‘to go’ has a postpositional phrase as a complement [*sen ojan ylitse*] ‘over the ditch,’ but it could also have an MA infinitive as a complement: [*kävelemään*] from the verb *kävellä* ‘to walk.’

(11') *minä tahdoin mennä sen ojan ylitse*
 'I wanted to go over the ditch'

(20) *minä tahdoin mennä kävelemään*
 I want-PAST-1SG go-INF walk-MAINF-ILL
 'I wanted to go for a walk'

The CC can also have a postpositional phrase as a complement (10'), but it appears to reject an infinitive in a similar position (21):

(10') *minä männäh hilasin seq oja ylite*
 I go-INF COL-PAST-1SG that-GEN ditch-GEN across
 'I went-COL across that ditch' (LA, Rautalampi)

(21) ?*minä mennä hilasin kävelemään*
 I go-INF COL-PAST-1SG walk-MAINF-ILL
 'I went-COL for a walk'

Example (21) might be questionable due to the word order, because the main verb *hilasin* would split an infinitive phrase [*mennä kävelemään*] in two. However, also the CC's with inverted word order seem to reject infinitive complements; thus, the word order is not a sufficient explanation. Furthermore, the CC may easily have other phrases as complements: only infinitive complements are rejected. Conceivably this is due to pragmatic, not syntactic reasons. It is possible that the CC and infinitive complement are just too solid to have common members: the verb *mennä* cannot adhere both to the CC [*mennä hilasin*] and to the infinitive phrase [*mennä kävelemään*] within one clause.

The CC may also function as an infinitive complement itself. In the following example (22) the CC [*laokata rehnimään*] is an adverbial, and the colorative verb is in the MA infinitive because of the valency of the predicator *lähteny* (from *lähteä* 'go away').

(22) *se teältä ol lähteny laokata rehnimään*
 it from-here have-PAST-3SG go-away-PTCP gallop-INF COL-MAINF-ILL
 'it [the horse] had left galloping-COL away from here'

Altogether, cohesion appears to distinguish the CC from other infinitive clauses more definitely than word order does. This reflects the fact that in the CC the verbs are more firmly connected, which makes the construction resistant to splitting and infinitive complements. The variants with an

infinitive preceding a finite verb are less cohesive, since they may be split; however, even they do not have infinitive complements. One must be cautious with negative conclusions, because our corpus does not necessarily reflect all the possible ways in which the CC could be used. It is remarkable, however, that Luttinen's examples collected from free speech are very much like our corpus, also with respect to their word order and cohesion. She, too, has no examples of any CC with an infinitive complement.

Nevertheless, even cohesion does not separate the CC rigorously from other infinitive clauses. There are no absolute syntactical criteria; therefore, the final difference can only be made with the help of semantics. The difference between CC and other infinitive clauses is virtually indisputable; colorative verbs are fundamentally different from any verb with an A infinitive as a complement or forming a verb chain with an A infinitive. The semantics of colorative verbs will be discussed further in section 6.2. Interestingly, even the semantic criteria are not sufficient in some cases (note the ambivalent verb *puohata* in the end of section 6.2).

5. Pragmatic restrictions

In the CC the colorative finite verb has normal personal and temporal endings, just like a simple predicator in any Finnish sentence. Technically, it should be possible to use the CC in any tense, person or mood, also in negative and interrogative sentences, following Finnish grammar. However, there seem to be pragmatic restrictions or at least restrictive tendencies regulating how the CC can be used. This is interesting if we consider the fact that ideophones are pragmatically restricted in many languages. They typically occur in declarative sentences and are uncommon in questions or negative sentences (Childs 1994: 188; Alpher 2001: 11). It has been reported that in some languages they are never negated (e.g. Kilian-Hatz 2001: 158; Klamer 2001: 168). In this section we will describe pragmatic restrictions connected with tense, person, and mood, and finally present some suggestions about negation and interrogation.

In most examples (74 of 85) in the corpus the colorative verb is conjugated and expresses tense, person and mood. In the remaining eleven cases the CC has a syntactic role that requires both verbs to be in the non-finite form (see example (22)), so there are no tense, person or mood endings in the colorative verb, but these can be seen in the main verbs of

these sentences. We shall hereafter simply say that the CC is used in a particular tense, person, and mood, regardless of which constituent expresses them.

5.1 Tense

All the four Finnish tenses are represented in the corpus: present, past, perfect and pluperfect (Finnish has no future tense). Mostly, the CC is used in the past (see examples (1), (4), (6)) or pluperfect tense ((16), (17), (22)). There are 65 examples in the past tense and 8 in the pluperfect tense. In three sentences the copula is omitted but the colorative verb is in the participle form in the perfect or pluperfect tense. These can be interpreted as pluperfects, as in the following example (23), where the next verb *oli tulluq* ‘had come’ is in the pluperfect.

- (23) *neq istuak kököttänneet vierekkäin kun ne oli*
 they sit-INF COL-PTCP-PL side-by-side when they have-PAST-3SG
tulluq isä ja äiti kottii (LA, Haapavesi)
 come-PTCP father and mother home-ILL
 ‘they [the girls] had been sitting-COL side by side when father and mother had come home’

In 11 cases the CC is in the present tense (see (19) and (24)).

- (24) *se tullaj jonottaa siellä se hauki* (LA, Rantasalmi)
 it come-INF COL-3SG there that pike
 ‘the pike comes-COL there’

Only one CC is in the perfect tense:

- (25) *sit oos ste kyntää pöhörity sahiroilla*
 it-PART have-3SG then plough-INF COL-PASS-PTCP harrow-PL-ADE
 ‘it [a field] has been then ploughed-COL with a harrow’ (LA, Temmes)

The frequency of past and pluperfect tenses reflects the tendency to use the CC in narrations. It is worth remarking that although the Finnish present tense is also used for future time, there are no such examples in the corpus. Neither does the present tense in the corpus refer to anything happening ‘now’ at the very moment of the interview. The present tense is used for

dramatizing narration, as in example (24), and for making a general statement, as in example (19). This kind of tense usage is, at least to some extent, due to the interview situation, where the informants were often asked to talk about ‘old times.’ In Luttinen’s corpus (2000) the CC is also used in the present tense to refer to real time:

- (26) *näkköökö ne pojat mitään kum minä seestäp pojotan*
 see-3SG-QX they boy-PL anything when I stand-INF COL-1SG
tässä eessä (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)
 here in-the-way

‘Can the boys see anything when I’m standing-COL here in the way?’

- (27) *no, nyt se pallaah hurottaa.* (Luttinen 2000, Keitele)
 PRT now it burn-INF COL-3SG
 ‘Well, now it’s burning-COL’

5.2 Person

The most common personal form found in the CC’s of our corpus is the 3rd person singular (37 cases; see e.g. examples (6), (16), (17)), while the 3rd person plural comes next (19 cases, see e.g. examples (19) and (23)). Ten sentences are in the 1st person singular (e.g. (1) and (10)), and in one sentence there is the regular personal ending of the 1st person plural (see (30) below). Thus, the first and third personal forms cover together 67 sentences. In 17 sentences the predicator is in the passive form (cf. (4) and (25); see also (28) and (29)). Finnish impersonal passive sentences do not express the identity of an agent, but it is almost invariably a human being. Passive sentences can refer to an animal, a machine or the like only metaphorically, if the verb typically has a human agent (ISK 2004: 1254, 1261–1262). This differs from the English passive, where the agent need not be human. Moreover, it is possible in English to express the agent explicitly with the *by* construction, whilst in Finnish passive sentences the agent cannot be identified. In our corpus, all passive sentences have a human agent.

- (28) *sinnehän sitä puohattiiv viijäj*
 there-AFFX it-PART COL-PASS-PAST take-INF
jokimyllyihinki (LA, Ylivieska)
 water-mill-PL-ILL-AFFX
 ‘it [the grain] was taken-COL to the water mills, too’

In most dialects, as well as in modern spoken Finnish, the passive form is commonly used instead of the regular personal ending in the 1st person plural (ISK 2004: 1221).

- (29) *me mentiin sieltä puimaa... niillä puijjar*
 we go-PASS-PAST from-there thresh-MAINF-ILL they-ADE thresh-INF
ryskytettiin sitte (LA, Ylivieska)
 COL-PASS-PAST then
 ‘we went from there to thresh... then we threshed-COL with them [flails]’

However, there are no examples of the passive occurring immediately after the 1st person plural personal pronoun *me* ‘we’ in this corpus. One example with the pronoun *me* has a regular personal ending:

- (30) *me kaataa hurrautimma yhtäällep päi*
 we bring-down-INF COL-PAST-1PL same-ADE direction
ihtennäs sinne (LA, Haapavesi)
 self.PX.1PL there
 ‘we brought-COL ourselves down to the same side’

Strikingly, there are no examples of the 2nd person in the CC. In one sentence the predicator is in the imperative 2nd person singular, but in the CC both verbs are in the A infinitive.

- (31) *ee muuta kun ... alas syöttööt töppööttee*
 not else-PART than start-IMP-2SG feed-INF COL-INF
 ‘just... start to feed-COL [the child]’ (LA, Vieremä)

The lack of the 2nd person is to be expected in the corpus: since the informants do not usually really discuss with the interviewers, and in narrations, the listener may not be addressed directly. Luttinen (2000) has a few examples of the 2nd person in free speech, although the 1st and 3rd persons are more common in her corpus:

- (32) *ethän sinä mitään tehny kuv vuam muatal luhnotit.*
 not-AFFX you anything do-PTCP but just lie-INF COL-PAST-2SG
 ‘You did nothing but lay-COL idle’ (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)
- (33) *työkö ootta juuvvar rullittanna koko korin?*
 you-PL-QX have-2PL drink-INF COL-PTCP whole case-GEN
 ‘have you drunk-COL the whole case [of beer]?’ (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)

Thus, there are no systematic restrictions that would rule the 2nd person out; rather, it is relatively uncommon in the CC.

5.3 Mood

In Finnish there are four moods: indicative, conditional, imperative and potential (see e.g. Karlsson 1987: 138–145; ISK 2004: 142). The vast majority (83/85) of the sentences are in the indicative mood. The conditional mood is used in the following example:

- (34) *yl puolentoista kilometrij jos latoa mättäs*
 more one-and-a-half-GEN kilometer-GEN if pile-INF COL-COND-3SG
 ‘[there were] more than a mile [of them] if you pile-COL [them] together’ (LA, Rautalampi)

The imperative is used once (see example (31) above). Luttinen’s (2000) examples are in the indicative mood too, except for two sentences in the conditional. The potential mood does not occur in our corpus.

5.4 Negation and interrogation

In the corpus there are no negative or interrogative sentences. Luttinen (2000) has one example of interrogative sentence (cf. (35)), but no negative sentences.

- (35) *tapella nyhtääkö ne siellä nykyään?* (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)
 fight-INF COL-3SG-QX they there nowadays
 ‘do they fight-COL there [in the pub] nowadays?’

Apparently, negative CC’s are very exceptional, but they can still exist. Ojutkangas has one example, even if it is of the two-finite variant (the infinitive variant would be *pyörtyä kupsahda*):

- (36) *pakko istua tässä vähän ettei ihan pyörry kupsahda*
 must sit-INF here a-little that-not PRT faint-NEG COL-NEG
 ‘[I] have to sit down here for a while, otherwise I’ll faint-COL’ (Ojutkangas 1998: 117)

Thus, a positive declarative clause is the most typical sentence type where the CC occurs, and it is very unusual to use the CC in questions or in any other mood than in the indicative. This rather strong pragmatic restriction is obviously connected to the role of the CC in the narrative function.

6. Semantic analysis

In this study we have pointed out that the CC has a special expressive force which distinguishes it from several other verbal expressions. Nevertheless, there are no absolute syntactic criteria that distinguish the CC from other infinitive clauses. The pragmatic restrictions are primarily tendencies connected to the narrative function of the CC; they apparently uphold the expressive force of the CC but do not explain it. Therefore, expressivity has to be essentially due to semantic factors. The colorative verbs seem to be in a key position, as they are fundamentally different from finite verbs in other types of infinitive clauses. It is, however, evident that expressivity is not merely a lexical phenomenon. The semantic analysis of this section focuses on three components of the CC: neutral verbs (6.1), subjects (6.2), and colorative verbs (6.3).

6.1 Neutral verbs

In the 85 constructions of our corpus there are 51 neutral verbs, the majority of which occur only once or twice. By far the most common verb is *mennä* ‘go,’ which occurs in 14 constructions. *Tulla* ‘come’ occurs five times, *viedä* ‘take’ and *käydä* ‘go, walk’ four times, *tehdä* ‘do, make’ and *lyödä* ‘hit, beat’ three times. If a neutral verb is used in multiple constructions, it never occurs with the same colorative verb; thus, all the 85 combinations of neutral and colorative verbs are unique in this corpus, except for one single case where a construction is used again by the same speaker in the next utterance.

The most common neutral verbs *mennä* ‘go’ and *tulla* ‘come’ describe movement by the subject referent, especially intentional movement in a particular direction, as do *kävellä* ‘walk,’ *käydä* ‘go, walk’ and *kulkea* ‘go,

follow.’ Some verbs describe a particular manner of movement (*kiittää* ‘go fast, rush, whip,’ *laukata* ‘gallop,’ *hypätä* ‘jump,’ *tanssia* ‘dance’), while two verbs describe unintentional movements (*kaatua* ‘fall (flat)’ and *pudota* ‘fall (off)’). All of these are typically intransitive, as are the verbs *istua* ‘sit,’ *seistä* ‘stand’ and *olla* ‘be,’ which refer to the position or the state of the subject referent. Another common group consists of transitive verbs which describe carrying, hitting, treating or handling different objects. These verbs can be relatively general (*kaataa* ‘bring down,’ *kantaa* ‘carry,’ *lyödä* ‘strike, beat,’ *tehdä* ‘make,’ *viedä* ‘take away’) or more specific (*ampua* ‘shoot,’ *maalata* ‘paint,’ *pestä* ‘wash,’ *sahata* ‘cut,’ *takoa* ‘hammer’). Furthermore, many describe typical activities in a rural environment: *kyntää* ‘plough,’ *niittää* ‘mow,’ *puida* ‘thresh,’ *pyytää* ‘hunt.’ The verbs in these two groups together cover about 75% of the constructions. Among the rest are verbs describing basic human functions, such as *hengittää* ‘breathe,’ *kuolla* ‘die,’ *nukkua* ‘sleep,’ *syödä* ‘eat,’ *syöttää* ‘feed,’ *juoda* ~ *ryypätä* ‘drink’ and *pieraista* ‘fart,’ but also *katsoa* ‘look,’ *haastaa* ‘talk’ and *sanoa* ‘say.’ Naturally, most of these can also be related to animals: *haukkua* ‘bark’ and *kukkua* ‘cuckoo,’ for instance, describe animal sounds.

The selection of neutral verbs is rather similar in Luttinen’s (2000) corpus. The most common neutral verbs are *mennä* and *tulla*, while *kävellä* and *olla* occur several times, but so do the verbs *ajaa* ‘drive,’ *juosta* ‘run’ and *maata* ‘lie (down),’ which are not found in our corpus. However, they fit well into the semantic categories sketched out above. This is also the case with the verbs that occur once or twice. Luttinen also has some neutral verbs describing natural phenomena: *palaa* ‘burn’ and *sataa* ‘rain.’

It is interesting that the selection of neutral verbs bears some resemblance to the verbs in serialized constructions. Foley and Olson postulate a hierarchy for serial verbs on the basis of the number of languages in which they are used. The most favoured are the “basic intransitive motion verbs,” such as ‘come’ and ‘go,’ while the next stage involves serialization with postural, motional and directional verbs, such as ‘stand’ and ‘lie’ (Foley and Olson 1985: 41–42). As mentioned above, verbs of these types are also common in the CC. However, transitive verbs are seldom used in verb serialization, and they form the last stage in Foley and Olson’s hierarchy (1985: 44). In this respect, a relatively wide range of types of verbs is used in the CC, but it is worth noting how concrete and physical the neutral verbs are: they describe events which could actually be seen or heard. Few verbs describe emotions or mental states, such as *kirota*

‘swear,’ *nauraa* ‘laugh,’ and *suuttua* ‘get angry;’ in Luttinen’s corpus there are also *kehua* ‘boast’ and *valehdella* ‘(tell a) lie.’ Even the general verbs are used in the most concrete way: in example (37) *olla* ‘be, have’ (which has many general, abstract, and even grammatical functions) just means ‘be still, immobile.’

- (37) *se ollam mollotti voaj ja kuola tul’*
 it be-INF COL-PAST-3SG just and dribble come-PAST-3SG
suusta ja, silemät nurim peässä (LA, Laukaa)
 mouth-ELA and eye-PL upside-down head-INE
 ‘[the child] just was-still-COL, dribble dropping from his mouth, eyes upside down’

Moreover, the verb *käydä* has many abstract meanings such as ‘happen,’ ‘occur,’ ‘attend,’ ‘begin’ or ‘visit,’ but in the CC it is only known in its most basic and concrete meaning ‘to walk, go by foot.’

- (38) *käyrä jumpathim peräsä k- oli raskas*
 walk-INF COL-PAST-PASS behind when have-PAST-3SG heavy
kuorma (LA, Veteli)
 load
 ‘we walked-COL behind as [the horses] had a heavy load’

Stylistically all the neutral verbs are unmarked: they are ‘basic words,’ primary expressions for the respective states, events and actions. Therefore, they do not usually have neutral synonyms with the same denotative meaning. They can be translated easily and they are listed in most dictionaries. All the neutral verbs of the corpus are listed e.g. in *Nykysuomen sanakirja* (NS). They can also be used in many text classes; this can be seen in the frequency dictionary of Finnish (Saukkonen et al. 1979), which was compiled in the 1960s from fictional and non-fictional books, radio programmes, newspapers and periodicals. It has all the neutral verbs of our corpus, except for four: *kukkua* ‘to cuckoo,’ *kyteä* ‘smoulder,’ *loukuttaa* ‘separate fibres from the flax,’ and *pieraista* ‘fart.’ The absence of these four words from the dictionary means that they have not occurred “in at least three different text samples or two mass medium and text classes” (Saukkonen et al. 1979: 36). Thus, these words do not (did not) belong to the most frequent words in written Standard Finnish, but they are not necessarily uncommon or out of the ordinary. *Loukuttaa* ‘separate

fibres from the flax' is quite specific, but it is not stylistically marked, and neither is *kyteä* 'smoulder.' Their absence from the frequency dictionary can be regarded as coincidental. On the other hand, it is easy to understand that *pieraista* 'fart' is very common in colloquial speech but does not (did not) occur in many text classes.

The most unexpected omission among the neutral verbs is *kukkua* 'to cuckoo.' The verb is clearly as onomatopoeic as its parallel in English; in fact it would be more suitable as the colorative verb of the CC. In most examples, neutral verbs differ significantly from their colorative counterparts, but there is no very clear stylistic difference between *kukkua* and *helkytellä* in the following example (39). Both are onomatopoeic, although *kukkua* is more conventional and specific. It can only denote a cuckoo's call, while *helkytellä* can describe many different sounds: playing the kantele (the Finnish zither), hammering or weaving (NS s. v. *helkytellä*).

- (39) *käki kukkuuh helekyttel kevväilä* (LA, Liperi)
 cuckoo cuckoo-INF COL-PAST-3SG spring-ADE
 'a cuckoo was calling-COL in the spring'

6.2 Subjects

The concreteness of the CC's, manifest in the neutral verbs, can be seen in their subjects as well. In most cases the subject referent of a CC is human; this is obvious in 1st person cases and passive forms (see section 5.2), but it holds true in most sentences in the 3rd person as well. Sometimes the subject is a noun, like 'old lady' in (7). While the 3rd person pronouns *se* 'he, she, it, that' and *ne* 'they' can refer to humans, animals or inanimate and abstract objects, their referent has to be deduced from the context. Most commonly it is a human being, as in (17) and (23). Relatively frequently, in 17 examples, the subject of the CC is an animal or animals, like wolf (6), horse (22) or pike (24). This is apparently due to the topic of the interviews, which was mostly connected to the rural environment, hunting, fishing and animal husbandry. Only in five cases is the subject referent non-human and non-animal, as in the following example (see also the rare inanimate case 'machines' in example (19)), and it is never abstract. This holds true in Luttinen's (2000) corpus as well.

- (40) *se pitkä puu sinneh hankeej jutkahti kuatuan* (LA, Nilsä)
 that long tree there snow-ILL COL-PAST-3SG fall-INF
 ‘the long tree fell-COL in the snow’

Thus, one must inevitably conclude—in the neutral verbs as well as in the selection of subjects—that the CC is highly context-specific and it is mostly used to refer to concrete things and events, hardly ever to abstract concepts. The same phenomenon is reflected in pragmatic restrictions: the CC is seldom used in the conditional mood or in negative sentences.

6.3 Colorative verbs

Compared to neutral verbs, colorative verbs form a more open class. There is a different colorative verb in almost every CC in our corpus: 78 different colorative verbs occur in 85 examples. It is not always easy, even for a native speaker, to define their meaning. In general, we can only say that the colorative verb emphasizes or specifies the denotative meaning of the neutral verb and that it often shows the action in a dramatic or comic light. Some colorative verbs are rather conventionalized and they can be found in dictionaries; but sometimes the meaning has to be deduced from the context, and it is questionable if colorative verbs have any ‘lexical’ meanings at all. It is difficult, if not impossible, to describe their meaning literally. This is an observation also made of ideophones in research into other languages (see Childs 1994: 188–189). Ideophones are highly specific (Kilian-Hatz 2001: 160; Klamer 2001: 165; Watson 2001: 393 calls them ‘ultimate hyponyms’), and their interpretation is highly dependent on the context (Schultze-Berndt 2001: 364).

The significance of context can be seen when the same colorative verb is used in different CC’s. The verb *lotkottaa* is used with *mennä* ‘go’ in example (6’) and with *tulla* ‘come’ in example (41).

- (6’) *susi lotkotti mennä erellä* (LA, Renko)
 ‘the wolf went-COL ahead’

- (41) *kiärmeet tulla lotkottivat tuasen aejan alaites* (LA, Liperi)
 snake-PL come-INF COL-PAST-3PL again fence-GEN under
 ‘the snakes came-COL under the fence again’

The neutral verbs are alike—they describe movement in different directions—but it is difficult to say whether the gait of a wolf and the slithering

of snakes have something else in common. It is possible that the colorative verb here emphasizes the fact that the animals move low and fast, jerking and determined. In contrast to ‘come’ and ‘go,’ in the following examples (42) and (43) neutral verbs are very different: *haastaa* ‘talk’ and *takoa* ‘hammer’:

- (42) *jaloilaan* *käveliit* *ja* *juoksiit* *ja* *haastaa*
 foot-PL-ADE-PX-3PL walk-PAST-3PL and run-PAST-3PL and talk-INF
nalkuttelliit (LA, Nuijamaa)
 COL-PAST-3PL

‘[the disabled people] were walking and running and talking-COL’

- (43) *sepät* *nalakuttel’* *takkoon* *ne* (LA, Nilsiiä)
 blacksmith-PL COL-PAST-3SG hammer-INF they
 ‘the blacksmiths hammered-COL them [scythes]’

Possibly the common component here is onomatopoeic: a loud, high-pitched sound produced by both talking and hammering. But the neutral verbs *kerjätä* ‘beg’ and *kiittää* ‘rush,’ occurring with the same colorative verb *pöllyyttää* in the following examples (44) and (45), are even more incompatible.

- (44) *ku* *äiti* *vaenoosta* *jäe* *niin* *juoksentelij*
 when mother deceased-ELA be-left-PAST-1SG then run-PAST-1SG
ja *kerjätöp* *pöllyytin* (LA, Vieremä)
 and beg-INF COL-PAST-1SG

‘when my mother died [I was so young that] I just ran around begging’

- (45) *muuta* *kuv* *viskattii* *hevoselloimi* *rekkeej* *ja* *kiittääp*
 else-PART than throw-PASS-PAST horse-rug sleigh-ILL and rush-INF
pöllyytettii
 COL-PASS-PAST (LA, Vieremä)

‘we just threw a horse-rug to the sleigh and rushed along’

In what sense can a child’s begging and a horse’s run be described with the same word? Here it is worth noticing that the two utterances were produced by the same informant. This suggests that in some cases just the occurrence of the CC *per se* is more crucial than a particular colorative verb. The colorative verb *pöllyyttää* does not necessarily carry any specific meaning;

it can rather be interpreted as a part of the speaker's repertoire. However, also example (31), with the colorative verb *töppööttää*, was produced by the same informant, and it is rather the rule than the exception that the same speaker uses different colorative verbs. After all, the selection of colorative verbs seems to be, at least to some extent, a matter of personal choice.

Because most of the colorative verbs occur just once in our corpus, it is only possible to define a highly context-specific meaning for them. In some cases, conclusions can be drawn with the help of adverbials or other expressions of manner in the same utterance. A common meaning or shade of meaning expressed with the CC is 'to do something quickly, suddenly, with ease,' as in examples (46) and (47); a similar meaning is also found in examples (1), (19) and (30).

- (46) *kohta kuoltaj jyrähti se ukko* (LA, Lapinlahti)
 soon die-INF COL-PAST-3SG that old-man
 'the old man died-COL soon'

- (47) *se oli kiireestij juossuq... mennäl länkännys sinnes*
 she have-PAST-3SG hurriedly run-PTCP go-INF COL-PTCP there
saunaaj (LA, Haapajärvi)
 sauna-ILL
 'she had run in hurry... gone-COL to the sauna'

The opposite meaning 'to do something slowly, hard, with an effort' is also common; see examples (48) and (49) (and also (10), (31) and (38)).

- (48) *kus se maalatakkit tuhurattiin nii siinä meni*
 when it paint-INF-AFFX COL-PAST-PASS so there go-PAST-3SG
aikaa (LA, Kihniö)
 time-PART
 'as it [the coffin] was painted-COL, too, it took a lot of time'

- (49) *kolomella jalalla könttäs vuam männä* (LA, Nilsjä)
 three-ADE foot-ADE COL-PAST-3SG only go-INF
 '[the cow] went-COL on three feet only'

In some cases the colorative verb is onomatopoeic, as in examples (50) and (51). This is evident in example (17), apparently also in (42) and (43).

- (50) *se hyvi isosti hengittää tuuhitti* (LA, Ylikiiminki)
 it very loud breath-INF COL-PAST-3SG
 ‘it [the cow] was breathing-COL very loud’
- (51) *ei mitääm muuta ko nauraa hörähytti ja niin se*
 not anything else-PART than laugh-INF COL-PAST-3SG and so he
nousi ylös (LA, Veteli)
 stand-PAST-3SG up
 ‘[he] did nothing but laugh-COL, and then he stood up’

In addition to the volatility and opacity of the meaning of colorative verbs, their phonological shapes also have considerable variation. (On phonological variation of ideophones in Finnish, see Jarva 2003: 79–84; in Finnish and Estonian, see Mikone 2001: 225; in African languages, see Childs 2001: 69.) It is very common that there are multiple closely related phonological items. For example, there is *hurauttaa* in our corpus (30) and *hurottaa* in Luttinen’s corpus (27), and in the examples below there are the verbs *jytkytellä* (52), *jytkähtää* (53) and *jytkäyttää* (54); see also *tuhahtaa* in (17) and *tuuhittaa* in (50). This kind of semantic and phonological variation makes it difficult to define which items are to be regarded as independent words and which are just variants of the same word. The colorative verbs seem to violate the principle of one-to-one matching of form and meaning; this is a suggestion also made of ideophones (Childs 1994: 189; Klamer 2001: 169).

- (52) *oh hyvä kävellä jytkytelläs siellä ja olla, kun on*
 be-3SG good walk-INF COL-INF there and be-INF when be-3SG
tervessä (LA, Lapinlahti)
 healthy
 ‘it is good to walk-COL and be there when you’re healthy’
- (53) *siellä oel sairas lehmä yöllä kuollaj jytkähtännä*
 there have-PAST-3SG sick cow night-ADE die-INF COL-PTCP
 ‘a sick cow had died-COL there at night’ (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)
- (54) *tämä, ni, lyyvväj jytkäytti* (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)
 this PRT punch-INF COL-PAST-3SG
 ‘this one [male friend], well, he punched [me]’

On the other hand, many of the colorative verbs in the corpus are also used as independent words and mentioned in dictionaries. NS knows 47 of the 78 colorative verbs, and some words absent as such from the dictionary are found in it in closely related forms. For example, the verb *tuuhitti* (see 50) is not found in NS, whereas the very similar verb *tuhista* ‘sniff, snuffle, snort’ is. It is interesting that in total 18 colorative verbs in the corpus, including, for example, *höräyttää* ‘to laugh deep, low’ in example (51), are onomatopoeic according to NS.⁶ However, in some cases onomatopoeic verbs can have other meanings as well: the verb *jyrähtää*, for instance, which can describe the sound of a thunderclap, occurs with the neutral verb ‘die’ in example (46).

Some colorative verbs in our corpus are labelled ‘descriptive’ in NS, but there are also 18 verbs with no special stylistic implications. It is also remarkable that although colorative verbs are in general unknown in the frequency dictionary (Saukkonen et al. 1979), it does include five of them. This suggests that at least some colorative verbs can be used in different registers and are not inevitably stylistically marked. Verbs of this kind include, for example, *haaskata* ‘waste, squander, fritter away, chuck away,’ *laahata* ‘drag; trail, shuffle, draw’ and *vääntää* ‘wring, bend, twist, wrench.’ They cannot be called ideophones or coloratives as such, but in the CC they are used in a way which gives them strong expressive connotations. In example (55) below the verb *laahata*, for instance, is used as a colorative verb.

- (55) *nee laahas mennäs sit tuola lumis* (LA, Renko)
 they COL-PAST-3SG go-INF then over-there snow-PL-INE
 ‘then they were going-COL there in the snow [with self-made skies]’

This sentence could be translated as something like ‘they went dragging...;’ however, the meaning is not exactly the same. It is significant that in Standard Finnish *laahata* is a transitive verb, but there cannot be an object (e.g. ‘skis,’ ‘feet,’ ‘themselves’) in this clause, as *mennä* ‘go’ is intransitive. If the meaning were ‘drag themselves,’ the intransitive form *laahautua* should be used. Thus it is obvious that *laahata* has not been used in this utterance in the same way as it is used in Standard Finnish.

Although some colorative verbs are not expressive without a context, or they are neutral in some contexts, it is clear that they still have certain

⁶ The dictionary uses abbreviations *deskr.v.* ‘descriptive verb’ and *onom.v.* ‘onomatopoeic verb.’

potential for expressivity, i.e. they can be used expressively in the CC. A neutral denotative verb with no expressive connotations cannot easily be used in that position. This is illustrated in example (56) with an obviously neutral, non-expressive verb *putosin* ‘I fell down.’ It is possible to say *minä kaaduin* ‘I fell (flat)’ or *minä putosin* ‘I fell down’ but *?kaatua putosin* is almost impossible. It blurs the meaning to such an extent that it breaks the rules of the language.

- (56) *?minä sinne lumeen kaatua putosin*
 I there snow-ILL fall-over-INF fall-down-PAST-1SG
 *‘I fell falling down in the snow’

However vague the meaning colorative verbs have, it is in any case evident that colorative verbs differ significantly from finite verbs that could be used in other infinitive clauses (*jaksaa* ‘can, be able to, bother,’ *muistaa* ‘remember,’ *osata* ‘can, be able to, know how to;’ *alkaa* ‘begin, start,’ *meinata* ‘mean, intend,’ *saada* ‘can, may, be allowed to,’ etc.; see section 4). The former are concrete and context-specific and they form an open class; the latter are abstract and conventionalized, forming a restricted class. These two verb types also differ in their relationship to the infinitive verbs with which they occur. Colorative verbs can modify the meaning of an infinitive, or they can express different shades of it, but they cannot deny it. In other infinitive clauses, the finite verb may be modal or permissive, and it is not presupposed that the event described by the infinitive verb really happened. For example, *männä hilasin* ‘I went.COL’ (10) means that the speaker really went somewhere, whereas *tahdoin mennä* ‘I wanted to go’ (11) does not necessarily imply that.

The difference between colorative verbs in the CC and finite verbs in other infinitive clauses is essential, and it is very seldom open to interpretation. There is, however, one ambivalent example (28) in our corpus with the verb *puohata*. The verb is an infrequent dialectal word unknown in Standard Finnish, and we suggested that it is a colorative verb:

- (28’) *sinnehän sitä puohattiv viijäj*
 there-AFFX it-PART COL-PASS-PAST take-INF
jokimyllyihinki (LA, Ylivieska)
 watermill-PL-ILL-AFFX
 ‘it [the grain] was taken-COL to the water mills, too’

However, Ikola et al. (1989: 286) have the verb *puohata* (which is the A infinitive form for *puohattiin*) in their list of “modal and permissive verbs” in LA; at the top of the list there are verbs such as *saada*, *voida*, *osata*, etc. They combine *puohata* with the colloquial *puuhata* ‘be busy (doing something)’ (Ikola et al. 1989: 294), and they give the same example as our example (28). Thus they have interpreted it as something like ‘we/they were busy taking the grain to the water mills, too’ (i.e. there is a finite verb + infinitive complement instead of a CC). This is still implausible, because there are no other mentions in the literature for *puohata* or even *puuhata* as modal or permissive, or that they occur with an A infinitive. Furthermore, the same verb occurs in Luttinen’s corpus:

- (57) *kyllä ne itkee puohasivat tihkipiätään* (Luttinen 2000, Kiuruvesi)
 yes they cry-INF COL-PAST-3PL headlong
 ‘they were crying-COL headlong’

Thus, it appears that the possibility of different interpretations only arises when the word is only known in a particular dialect and a researcher without a native skill of that dialect cannot state with certainty whether the word is a modal or a colorative verb.

7. Conclusion: the colorative construction and expressivity

In this paper we have frequently referred to the expressive force of the CC and stated that this force is characteristic, even essential, to the CC and is what distinguishes it from other infinitive clauses. However, it still remains difficult to definitely, precisely pinpoint where this force comes from.

As stated in section 4, the CC does not differ syntactically from other infinitive clauses; no absolute criteria were established in this study at any rate. In a typical CC the word order is different from that in a typical infinitive clause; however, it is easy to find exceptions to this, since word order in Finnish can vary. A possibly more significant difference is the cohesion of the CC, as it is impossible in Standard Finnish to put any constituent between the verbs. But even this does not hold true in dialects, where the CC has a less coherent variant.

There are some pragmatic restrictions, or at least restrictive tendencies, regulating how the CC may be used (section 5), and they are obviously connected to the role of the CC in the narrative function. In this sense the CC differs from other infinitive clauses. In general it can be said that the

CC describes what *happens now* or *did happen*, rather than what *does not happen*, *should happen*, *could have happened*, etc. That CC is highly context-specific can also be seen in the neutral verbs and in the selection of subjects (see sections 6.1 and 6.2). The neutral verbs refer to concrete events, hardly ever to abstract concepts. The subject referent of the CC is typically animate, either a human being or an animal.

The difference between colorative verbs in the CC and finite verbs in other infinitive clauses is essential (section 6.3). Colorative verbs fit into many of the findings made about ideophones in research into other languages. Still these verbs do not uphold the expressive force of the CC alone. Not all colorative verbs are indisputably ideophones; rather, at least some of them can be used in different registers and they are not stylistically marked. Nevertheless, they have potential for expressivity. A neutral denotative verb with no expressive connotations cannot easily be used in the same position.

In the CC, syntax and semantics are in a particularly close interaction and therefore reinforce the expressivity of the construction: the colorative verbs mostly do have an expressive force of their own, but the syntactic construction further emphasizes it. However, syntax cannot uphold expressivity by itself: it is not possible to use any verb in the CC. It is worth noting that even if the CC does not differ formally from other infinitive clauses, the difference between them is clear in practice. Ambivalent cases are rare, and they are caused by unusual or unknown dialectal vocabulary. Insufficient context may also impair the interpretation of our examples.

The CC has been compared to the serial verb construction, but we argue that they differ quite considerably from one another (see section 2). Yet it must be admitted that the CC also has a two-finite variant which fits better the prototype of a serial verb construction. However, the functions of typical serial verb constructions and the CC are essentially different, regardless of whether both verbs are finite or not. Serial verb constructions do not usually have expressive or even adverbial functions. Neither does research into serial verb constructions suggest such stylistic differences as can be observed in the CC.

As colorative verbs are in many respects comparable with ideophones, it is interesting to consider in which syntactical constructions ideophones are used in different languages. In many languages around the world ideophones are used mostly in specific syntactic positions, in specific structures or with specific words. They quite commonly occur in alliance with neutral verbs. They are referred to as ‘co-verbs’ (e.g. Nuckolls 2001: 276; Schult-

ze-Berndt 2001: 360–367) or ‘con-verbs’ (Amha 2001: 59–61), which are linked with fully inflected neutral verbs. Remarkably, ideophones often occur with a ‘dummy’ verb like ‘do’ or ‘say’ that bears inflectional information (see e.g. Childs 1994: 187; Alpher 2001: 10–11; Nuckolls 2001: 271–272).

In Finnish, the situation is somewhat different. Ideophones can also be used elsewhere than in the CC, and although in the CC there has to be an ideophone or at least a ‘potentially expressive’ verb, the construction itself is not syntactically unique but parallel with other infinitive clauses. There are some pragmatic restrictions, but in a wider perspective Finnish colorative verbs can be used relatively freely in many syntactical positions. It is also worth noting that colorative verbs are fully inflected, in contrast to languages where ideophones are uninflected and occur only with inflected verbs; as Childs (1994: 185) puts it, in African languages “ideophones display very little morphology.” Thus, the full inflection of Finnish colorative verbs, as *tupsahdin* in example (58), is quite exceptional.

- (58) *minä kaatua tupsahdin*
 I fall-over-INF COL-PAST-1SG
 ‘I fell with a thump’

Considering what happens in many other languages, it could be expected that it is the neutral verb that would be inflected while the colorative verb stayed in the infinitive form (59). Alternatively, the colorative item may not be a verb at all, but rather an uninflected ideophone that does “function somewhat apart from the matrix language” (Childs 1994: 178) as illustrated in example (60). The example is acceptable—especially if *tups* is interrupted as an onomatopoeic interjection and preceded by the conjunction *että* ‘that’—while (59) is absolutely ungrammatical.

- (59) **minä kaaduun tupsahtaa*
 I fall-over-PAST-1SG COL-INF
 *‘I fell to thump’

- (60) ?*minä kaaduun (että) tups*
 I fall-over-PAST-1SG that thump
 ?‘I fell ‘thump’

Is it then possible to explain why only the colorative verb is inflected, although this appears to be exceptional? The construction illustrated in

example (59) is unacceptable because the neutral verbs are conventional lexical items with particular valency: they cannot join with an A infinitive of any verb. Colorative verbs do not, for the most part, have conventional valency in the same sense, but they may have different arguments, e.g. be either transitive or intransitive, depending on the situation. It is also interesting that when a finite verb and an A infinitive occur in the same clause any other arguments than subject are dependent on the infinitive verb. Thus, the CC has the same argument structure as its neutral verb. On the other hand, example (59) is fairly close to the construction with an E infinitive:

- (61) *minä kaaduin tupsahtaen*
 I fall-over-PAST-1SG COL-EINF
 ‘I fell with a thump’

Interestingly, Ojutkangas (1998: 111) points out that constructions like this could probably be interpreted as “separate con-verb forms;” as mentioned above, ideophones are also interpreted as con-verbs in some languages. However, the meaning in example (58) is not exactly the same as in example (61): while the former describes an event as a whole, the latter (with the E infinitive) separates it into two events. In most cases it can be translated into English with an adverb (e.g. the prepositional phrase ‘with a thump,’ sometimes a present participle such as ‘thumping’). (For the E infinitive, see ISK 2004: 493; Karlsson 1987: 157–158 has a traditional term 2nd infinitive).

Although the inflectional possibilities of Finnish colorative verbs seem to be rather peculiar, there are some, albeit few, examples of inflected ideophones in different languages. Rubino (2001: 303–304) points out that ideophones in Ilocano have a highly productive derivational and inflectional morphology. According to Nuckolss (2001: 272), in one dialect of Quechua “ideophones can be used to form verbs fully inflected for tense, person, and number,” while Kaufman (1994: 66) gives examples of “symbolic roots” in Huastec which are “thoroughly integrated into the derivational and inflexional morphology.” Thus, it is possible that the ‘ungrammaticality’ of ideophones has been overemphasized in the literature, possibly because they have mostly been examined in isolating or otherwise morphologically less complicated languages. In this respect it is not extraordinary that the Finnish language exploits its rich morphological and inflectional possibilities in its ideophones and colorative verbs.

Finally, we attempt to sketch out some factors which may explain how the CC has developed. The three different variants of the CC have to be taken into account:

(a) *kaatua tupsahdin* (as in examples (1) and (58)). This variant may be called ‘basic’ as it is the most common in our corpus and it is also known in Standard Finnish. The variant is coherent, i.e. there cannot be any constituents between the verbs.

(b) *tupsahdin ... kaatua* (as in examples (6) and (10)): This variant with an ‘inverted’ word order covers about 20% of our corpus. It is not acceptable in Standard Finnish, but most of its equivalents in Balto-Finnic languages have a corresponding word order. Variant (b) is less coherent than (a), as there may be constituents between the verbs.

(c) *kaaduin tupsahdin* (as in example (10)): This ‘two-finite’ variant is not found in our corpus, but it undoubtedly exists in Finnish dialects and it is also known in Standard Finnish. This type has the widest distribution in the Finno-Ugric language family, as it has equivalents also in Sami and Hungarian. There may be constituents between the verbs, but apparently the word order is reversed from variant (b); i.e. the neutral verb precedes the colorative one.

In variant (c) there is just asyndetic juxtaposition with no conjunction. This is typical of the syntax of Finno-Ugric languages and it is supposed to be the original state, since conjunctions in these languages are innovations or borrowings (Pulkkinen: 1966: 14–15; Ojuskangas 1998: 111). The wide distribution of variant (c) seems to support the idea that it is the most archaic one. But it is still not evident that variants (a) and (b) have developed on the basis of (c); at least some explanation is needed why a neutral verb has changed to a non-finite form. One reason could be that asyndetic juxtaposition, albeit original, has become so extraordinary in Finnish that it has been replaced with an infinitive clause. Pulkkinen (1966: 214) suggests that asyndetic juxtaposition has been retained in Finnish to a lesser extent than in most Balto-Finnic languages. The development towards the infinitive clause could also be explained with grammaticalization.

It is significant that Givón (1991: 93–94) links cohesion and grammaticalization in his study of serial verbs: when they “display a much higher frequency of adjacency to other verb stems,” this also means “a higher potential for co-lexicalization or co-grammaticalization.” This suggests that variant (b) with ‘inverted’ word order is less grammaticalized than variant (a), as constituents are allowed between the verbs. Interestingly, variant (b) bears a closer resemblance to the other infinitive clauses also as to its word order, which is finite + infinitive (see section 4.1). Thus cohesion and word order work in interaction. Variant (b) also has a wider distribution in Balto-Finnic languages.

It can therefore be supposed that variant (b) is older than variant (a), and this leads to the conclusion that the CC has its origin in infinitive clauses rather than in asyndetic juxtapositions. But this view leads to the question, how has the semantic gap between other infinitive clauses and the CC developed? How is it possible that an expressive construction has adopted the same syntactical structure as modal, permissive and otherwise abstract infinitive clauses? To some extent the infinitive verb could be understood as an explanation or a specification of the finite verb; therefore the infinitive clause *minä tahdoin mennä* ‘I wanted to go’ (cf. example (11)) could be paraphrased as

- (62) ?*minä tahdoin* *niin, että menisin*
 I want-PAST-1SG so that go-PAST-COND-1SG
 ?‘I wanted it to be so that I’d go.’

Similarly, the CC *susi lotkotti mennä* ‘the wolf went-COL’ (cf. example (6)) could be paraphrased as

- (63) *susi lotkotti* *niin, että se meni*
 wolf COL-PAST-3SG so that it go-PAST-3SG
 ‘the wolf COL-ED so that it went.’

Whatever the development has been, variant (a) *kaatua tupsahdin* is its end point. With its cohesion it is the most grammatical and most grammaticalized variant, and it is also the most marked one, as it clearly differs from both the asyndetic juxtaposition and the infinitive clause. On the basis of our corpus, it is also the most frequent. The more distinguished the grammatical form is, the greater its expressive force.

Abbreviations

ADE	adessive case	MAINF	MA infinitive
AFFX	affirmative suffix	NEG	negative form
CC	colorative construction	PART	partitive case
COL	colorative verb	PASS	passive
COND	conditional mood	PAST	past tense
EINF	E infinitive	PL	plural
ELA	elative case	PRT	particle
GEN	genitive case	PTCP	participle
ILL	illative case	PX	possessive suffix
IMP	imperative mood	QX	questioning suffix
INE	inessive case	SG	singular
INF	(A) infinitive		

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