Abstract. The article observes the qualitative change of lexical units as a natural part of language development process. The authors aspire to explicate the regularities in changes that the meaning of phraseological expressions has undergone. This is performed on the example of phrase läheb nagu lepase reega 'goes as on an alder sleigh' — an etymologically old and genuine phrase that is popularly used in Estonian dialectal, colloquial and literary language and which semantic meaning has been subject to the largest possible qualitative change. The reconceptualization of the motif can be explained by the context of the image’s formation and the cognitive motivation of motion event.

Keywords: Estonian, aspect, cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphor, image schema, motion event, phraseology.

Introduction

The qualitative change of lexical units is a natural part of the development process of any language and it is brought about by intralinguistic and extralinguistic factors. Compared to lexemes, phraseological expressions as language units are more cliché in contents and form and are less subject to change. Still, changes in the meaning clearly occur also in fixed phrases. We have chosen to demonstrate the regularity of changes on the example of a phraseological expression läheb nagu lepase reega 'goes as an alder sleigh' for several reasons: (i) it may represent an etymologically old genuine phrase that is not known in the languages of the closest neighboring countries of Estonia or further away,¹ and this facilitates eliminating the extralinguistic influences; (ii) it is used with a regular frequency in Estonian language, and thus it is a good illustration of the process of qualitative change.

¹ Traces of the view that alder is something of low quality can be found also in a North-Vepsian song: bałčiž ajiž kołyhažiž, kórežiž, lepżyja režižja (from personal communication with Tiit-Rein Viitso; see also Lonin 2000: 69; Melentjeva 1994: 30). Karelians of the Tver Oblast used to say elä pilkkaa keyhän kelkkua, leppäni on oma reges 'don’t mock a poor man’s sledge: your own sleigh is made of alder’. (For this we are grateful to Silja Grünberg and Lembit Vaba!).
guistic factors of content changes; (ii) The phrase has been subject to the largest possible qualitative change as its original meaning 'go badly' has been replaced by a directly opposite meaning 'go well'.

The article is divided in two parts. The first part focuses on the identity of the expression: its origin, distribution, figurative mechanism, and the second part employs image schemas and conceptual metaphors in exploring the regularity in reversing the meaning of the phrase.

1. The origin and use of the phrase läheb nagu lepase reega

1.1. The origin of the images regi and kelk 'sleigh' and 'sledge'

The phrase läheb nagu lepase reega is an old authentic Estonian phrase, which precise dating continues to be rather problematic (further on this see Õim 2005). Most likely, the expression started to circulate during the period when sledges and sleighs as means of transport were adopted. Sledges may have emerged in the 13th century in order to facilitate the transportation of stones for constructing stone structures, or already in the 1st millennium BC when some vehicle was used for transporting stones for building fortified settlements. Initially, plough or harrow sledges, later also hay sledges, hind sledges, and hand sleds were used for transport. Simple runner-sledges were known among the Baltic and Finnic peoples as well as among their Germanic neighbours, while sleighs or sledges were not known in the eastern and southern Slavonic areas (Vières 1980 : 33ff).

In Baltic and Finnic languages the names for sleigh share the same root: Lithuanian roges, Latvian ragavas, Estonian regi, Livonian reggoz. The old origin of the word is emphasized by the Baltic-German Regge, Ragge, which was used to designate a local peasant sleigh (Vières 1980 : 46—47). According to Julius Mägiste (EEW 2442), the noun regi is of Baltic-German or Finnic origin. The diminutive form of the word, reekene, and the South-Estonian dialectal riikene, reikene (EKMS III 535) have been used as equivalent of the Estonian word kelk, 'sled', a smaller vehicle with runners of more recent origin that was used in more or less the same transport function (Vières 1980 : 39, 49). The fact that sled was equalled with a small sleigh appears to be revealed in the construct nagu noor regi 'like a small sleigh' (Käina parish). The world kelk has been derived from Swedish (EEW 767). However, Ferdinand Johann Wiedemann's "Ehstnisch-deutsches Wörterbuch" (1869) does not list the logical German words like Schleife or Schlitzen (Bauerschlitten, Handschlitten) under translation equivalents for sleighs and sledges. Russian language contains various figurative expressions built upon the metaphor of winter transport vehicles, but it is not easy to determine their semantic equivalence with the corresponding Estonian metaphors; cf. for example, в свои сани не садись to its Estonian semantic translation equivalent iga kingsepp jäägu oma liistude juurde 'let not the shoemaker go beyond his last'. The difference of motifs was most likely conditioned by differences in the economic priorities of these regions. According to the Estonian ethnologist Ants Vières (1980 : 36—38), the distribution area of the word regi coincided with the Baltic countries, where people used simple runner-sledge, which functioned like a fork slide, and Eastern Europe, where the universal post sledge was used.
1.2. The spread of the motif in older and modern Estonian language

The motif group of regi and kelk seems to be in a state of torpor in modern Estonian literary language, the only exception are perhaps a few phrases. The dictionary of Estonian literary language (EKSS V 53) includes the phrase läheb nagu lepase ~ lepse reega 'goes as on an alder sleigh', whereas Estonian and foreign-language dictionaries only present the first variant. The indirect meaning of the word regi is not provided in this dictionary and it is only referred to in quotations (see Example 1).

(1) Kuid mu kooliasjus polnud Joonas küll minuga ühel reeel (= ühes nõus) 'But as far as school was concerned, Joonas was definitely not on the same sleigh (i.e. agreeing) with me'

In the corpus of Estonian literary language of 1890—1990, compiled at the University of Tartu (http://test.cl.ut.ee/korpused/baaskorpus/), the number of occurrences of the phrase läheb nagu lepase ~ lepse reega remains a little under one hundred; there seems to be no preference for the first, more literary variant. The phrase emerges most often in the Estonian written press of the second half of the 1990s and the 2000s, while the use is more limited in earlier and stylistically more advanced texts. Also, the phrase has hardly ever been used in texts of contemporary media, such as online chatrooms, news groups, forums, and comment sections of online newspapers. The use of other phrases connected with sleigh and sledge metaphors appears even more coincidental (see Examples 2 and 3).

(2) "Suserdasin omaette, salamisi lootsin reeel tagasisaada," meenutab tanutuseid aegu (newspaper Eesti Ekspress 2000) 'I was dealing with things on my own, trying to get back on the sleigh (i.e. back on my feet)," he reminisces about the rainy days'

(3) Ta raken dab valimiskampaania suusaraheette, ja Tallinna limajuhid annavad kirjaliku nõusoleku Nõmmele suusakeskuse rajamiseks (newspaper Eesti Ekspress 1999) 'He's harnessing the election campaign to pull the skiing functionaries' sleigh and the leaders of Tallinn give a written consent for building a skiing centre in Nõmme'

While the dialectal corpus of Estonian language (www.murre.ut.ee/triip/murdekorpus/) does not include the phrase läheb nagu lepase ~ lepse reega, the database of Estonian phrases (http://www.folklore.ee/justkui/) confirms the broad distribution of the sleigh metaphor in Estonian dialects (175 query results in total, see Examples 4—8). Corresponding utterances have been recorded also in the 1960s—1970s. In addition, earlier sources, including the dictionaries by F. J. Wiedemann (1869) and A. Saareste (EKMS I—IV), report these in great numbers.

(4) Pilistvere3 Eks iga töö ole esti võeras, tahab harjuda, pärast läheb kui lepase reega 'Well, every task seems unfamiliar at first; it...
takes time, but afterwards goes as on an alder sleigh; Lüganuse L a s e p k u i l e p p ä s e r i e g ä, laseb justu nii et vahet ei ölek. Möned asjad valestab 'S l i d e s a s o n a n a l d e r s l e i g h, talks so much that makes no pauses in the talk. Lies about some things’

(5) Kullamaa See oli üks kevade — tulime metsaveost, viimane pidu oli, vaat jää tee äärde — e i j o o k s n u d r e g i e g a r a t a s ‘This happened one spring. We came from transporting wood, this had been the last party and we were almost stuck there by the road — neither s l e i g h n o r w h e e l w o u l d r u n’

(6) Pöide Kuidas siis su oma e l u r e g i l i b i s e b, kus sa nüüd oma elu-järjega oled? ‘How’s your own life’s s l e i g h s l i d i n g o n, how’s your life going?’; Nüüd t e m a k e l k õieti j o o k s e b (=nüüd on tal palju austajaid) (Wiedemann 1869 : 288) ‘Now h e r s l e d g e i s r u n n i n g as it should (= now she has many suitors’)

(7) Jõhvi Vea nagu vene kelku (= midagi enda järel lohistama) ‘Pull along like a Russian sledge (= drag something or someone); Märjamaa V e a b i k k e k e l k u ka vahel (= valetab) ‘He d o e s p u l l t h e s l e d g e (i.e. lies) every once in a while’

(8) Häädemeeste T a o n k u i k e l k j ä r e l p a n d u d ‘He h a s a s i f a s l e d g e t i e d t o i t s b a c k’

In this light, it is particularly noticeable that compared to dialects and other colloquial use, the figurative use of the words regi and kelk is rather limited in the Estonian literary language. It remains unclear why the metaphor has not been strongly established. One reason for that may be a change in people's living conditions; the abandoning of certain objects has made words and concepts fall into oblivion. As means of transport, sleighs and sledges have largely lost their practical importance, or their function has changed: sleds are known to be more used by children and as sports equipment or simply for riding for pleasure. Thus, sleighs and sledges as such are definitely not completely unknown for modern people. It is rather possible that the words regi, kelk, etc. are now less used for marking abstract phenomena (course of life, way of thinking, human relationships, etc.) because the items are no longer as topical in practical use. That is, changes in everyday life quite soon become fixed in our ways of thinking and, thus, also in language. This, however, seems a rather arbitrary line of reasoning, especially considering that many other archaic metaphors, such as the ones employed in Biblical expressions, have survived under similar circumstances. Another argument against the hypothesis is that in Modern Estonian language, phrases built upon the sledge or sled metaphor are quite common, understood in the context and pertinent. A fine example of this would be the embellished use of language by a well-known Estonian coach, Andres Sõber (saine kelgu peale 'got on the sledge', olime kelgus 'were on the sledge' while speaking about a successful basketball match) or the plethora of results yielded by a Google search (over 10,000 results, see Examples 9—12).

(9) Siis on mehel u u e s t i r e e p e a l e s a a m i s e k s ilmselt vajalik läbi teha ‘The man probably has got to do whatever it takes t o g e t
back on the sleigh...'; *We may never be able to pull us back on the sleigh*; *Proovitaks reigikaitse ree peale kontööraoks sokutada* 'They try to get them on the state defence sleigh without being invited'; *Maadeva-hetajate ree peale üritas hüpata ka Rein Kilk* 'Rein Kilk was also among those who tried to jump on the sleigh of lot traders'; *... hüpanud moodsa nu-jazzi ree peale* '... has jumped on the sleigh of modern nu-jazz' (10) *Mart Laar tagasi reel* 'Mart Laar is back on the sleigh'; *Tolerantsuse reel* Mika on usinalt öppinud saksa ja türigi keelt 'On the sleigh of tolerance, Mika has eagerly studied German and Turkish'; *Rehepapid suurel NATO reel* 'Old Barneys on the great NATO sleigh'; *Miks Sa siis ise olid nii rahvarindelane kui eestikongreslane, igaks juhaks kahel reel?* 'Why were you then in both the People's Front and the Congress of Estonia, on both sleighs, just in case?'; *Vanahäda mes Kalev Kits* 'Rein Kilk was also among those who tried to jump on the sleigh of lot traders'; ... has jumped on the sleigh of modern nu-jazz' (10) *Mart Laar tagasi reel* 'Mart Laar is back on the sleigh'; *Tolerantsuse reel* Mika on usinalt öppinud saksa ja türigi keelt 'On the sleigh of tolerance, Mika has eagerly studied German and Turkish'; *Rehepapid suurel NATO reel* 'Old Barneys on the great NATO sleigh'; *Miks Sa siis ise olid nii rahvarindelane kui eestikongreslane, igaks juhaks kahel reel?* 'Why were you then in both the People's Front and the Congress of Estonia, on both sleighs, just in case?'; *Vanahäda mes Kalev Kits* 'Rein Kilk was also among those who tried to jump on the sleigh of lot traders'; ... has jumped on the sleigh of modern nu-jazz' (11) *Oma riigi saamine on meil kõike nii kiirelt ja põhjalikult muutnud, et annab ikka ree peal püsida* 'Becoming an independent country has changed everything so quickly and thoroughly that you have to work hard to keep yourself on the sleigh'; *Neil ei önnestunud enam ree peal püsida ja et pärast viimaseid Riigikogu valimisi langesid nad Eestit valitsevast politikartellist sootus välja* 'They could no longer keep themselves on the sleigh and after the last parliamentary elections fell out of the ruling political cartel'; *Kaotajate poolel hoidis oma timi ree peal Martti Varsusk 26 punktiga* 'Among the losing team, Martti Varusk kept the team on the sleigh with the score of 26' (12) *Kui keegi hakkab vahepeal ree pealt ma ha kolima, tekitab see kindlasti probleeme* 'When somebody is starting to get off the sleigh, it will definitely cause problems'; *Mõistsin, et ta on ree pealt maas* 'I realised that he is off the sleigh' The chart (Figure 1) summarises the popularity of the use of the phrase läheb nagu lepse reega on the scale of time and communicative
situation. In order to juxtapose disproportionate absolute numbers we divided results from the corpus of Estonian literary language (http://test.cl.ut.ee/korpused/baaskorpus/), the database of Estonian phrases (http://www.folklore.ee/justkul/) and results of Google queries into three groups: (1) up to 20 results; (2) approx. 50 results; (3) over 10,000 results. According to the registry, we distinguished between four groups: (1) public written language use, esp. in academic writing and fiction; (2) written edited communication by means of the written press; (3) spontaneous written online communication; and (4) casual conversation in dialect.

Regardless of the temporal perspective, this forms a unit of predominantly colloquial speech, and next to oral communication is becoming increasingly acceptable in written form. Quite probably, this model characterizes the stratum of the earlier phraseology that is still active in Modern Estonian.

2. About qualitative shifts in the sleigh and sledge images

Phrases employing the image of sleigh or sledge tend to have a negative connotation: these are often used to refer to an illegitimate child, being in trouble, bad manners, negative attitude, etc. Characteristically enough, these phrases never entail an explicit evaluative marker. For example, outside the context, a modern language user will have problems recognizing the derogatory attitude in the expression poeg isa kelgus ’son on his father’s sled’ (EKMS I 394). Comprehension of such phrases is perhaps facilitated by learning that sleighs and sledges as year-round means of transport of a rather wide range of use implied a hard, toilsome and fatiguing work. Identification of life, hardships, similarity among members of family etc. with the image of sleigh or sledge seems to be characteristic of Estonian language only, whereas its distribution in local dialects is quite even and common.

A prototypical animal pulling a sleigh or sledge is a horse; if an animal of less power is mentioned in this context, the phrase indicates that the
work is not advancing as it should, things are going slowly or are failing. Nothing good will come of it when a man is mentioned pulling the sleigh/sledge instead of a horse (see Example 13).

(13) Saarde justkui kits kelgu ees 'like a goat pulling the sledge (used to refer to a failing venture)'; Kose Võtab hinda küll, aga sellegipärast on kits kelgu ees (= ta on sellegipärast vaene) 'He bargains at a high price but even then has as if a goat pulling the sledge (= is nevertheless poor)'; Setu nagu jänesele peräregi takah (= linnainimesele talutöö) 'as if a hare is harnessed to the sleigh (= farmwork for townsfolk); veab kelku (= valetab) 'pulling the sledge (= telling lies')

If people follow in the footsteps of senior family members, they will become similar to them and may adopt bad manners. Taking things that belong to others or using other people's property is usually looked upon with disfavour (see Example 14).

(14) Pojad on isarees, isa kelgus (Wiedemann 1869 : 1045, 288) (= pojad on isa sarnased halvas mõttes) 'Sons are on their father's sleigh, on their father's sledge (= sons are like their father, in a negative sense); Tartu Ega seegi regi teise ree peale ei lähde 'This sleigh won't go on another sleigh either (referring to a young girl whose older sister is known for her lascivious conduct); Kullamaa Sõidab teise kelgus, rees, saanis (= mugatseb, elab teise arvel) 'Rides on someone else's sleigh or sledge (= freeloads, lives at someone else's expense); Kuusalu Noorest pääst on elbul old ja teiste kelkujel mäest alla laast (= teiste kulut elanud) 'In youth [s/he] used to slide down the hill on other people's sleds (= freeloaded, lived at someone else's expense); Karksi töise kelgu pääl istje oleme (= kaval olema, töist oma kasus tüöd tettä ja vaeva näättä laskeme) 'sitting on someone else's sledge (= being clever, exploiting someone and making the person work for one's own good); cf. [kellegi] naha peal elama 'living on [sb's] skin', [kellegi] turja peal liigu laskema 'sliding on [sb's] back', [kellegi] selga elama tulema 'coming to live on [sb's] back'; Mis viga teiste püstega tules istuda (EV 11867) 'What's there not to like sitting in the fire in someone else's pants'; Mis viga teiste hobustega söita on (EV 11868) 'What's there not to like riding on other people's horses'

In some cases it is not specified who or what is pulling the vehicle, but the negative connotation of the phrase is nevertheless clearly obvious (see Example 15).

(15) Ambla Küll ta vaene on nüüd kelgus 'Poor him, now he's on the sledge!'; Tori Küll ma olin saadanaga kelgus 'How I was on the sledge with the devil'; Täna olen kelgus (= täna olen omadega pigis) (Wiedemann) 'I'm on the sledge today (= I'm in trouble); Olin koks nädalat ära ja poiss on ikka rees (= endiselt halvas seisus) 'I was away for a fortnight and the boy is still on the sledge (= still in bad shape); cf. kelku
panema (= kihlama) ’put on the sledge (= to be engaged’); Kodavere Emä tuli kodo ja ütles, Matsi-Mari panti kelkku. Kui kõsjad õlid äräd juadud, panti kelkku ’Mother came home and said, Mari of Matsi was put on the sledge. When betrothal was arranged, they were put on the sledge’; Kodavere Sööb ärä, köik paneb kelkku (= paneb nahka) ’Eats up, puts everything on the sledge (= devours’); kelgus (EKMS I 564 (keyword HäDAS ’in trouble’) ) ’on the sledge’

It is quite logical that people sitting on the same sleigh or sledge share something in common — ways of thinking, attitudes, dispositions — or are of the same age. Examples 16–18 offer more exceptional, neutral phrases.

(16) Saarde Sai teise oma kelgu peale (= sai teise oma nõusse) ’Got him/her on his sleigh (= got his/her consent’); Jüri Küll teie tulete veel lõpuks minu ree peale (= küll teie tulete kord samale arvamisele, kui mina olen) ’You will eventually come on my sleigh (= you will eventually agree with me’); Maarja-Magdaleena Tema tuleb minu ree peale (= toimib nagu mina) ’He will come to my sleigh (= will follow my example’); Kodavere, Palamuse Teie tulete ike minu kelgu piale, minä eitule teie kelgu piale mette (= noored kord vananevad ning muutuvad töövõime tuiks) ’You will come to my sledge, and I definitely won’t come on yours (= even the young become older and lose their work capacity’)

(17) Kui mä tema kelku sain (= kui ta mind halvate teele, eksi-teele viis) (Wiedemann 1869 : 288) ’When I got on his/her sledge (= when s/he mislead me, corrupted me’); Rõuge Kirgu-i midägi uma muurusöga, küll tult piä miivannu rekke ’Don’t you talk back at me in your youth, you’ll come on our sledge soon enough’; Kust sa nende kelku said? ’How did you get on their sledge?’

(18) ühte kelku heitama (= ühte liiki või mesti heitma, ühes mesti olema) (EKMS II 559) ’be thrown on the same sleigh (= group under the same type, be on the same side’); Ta on sese rees (= ses mesti) (EKMS II 559) ’He is on this sleigh (= in on this matter’); iga reepaal söitma (= nina tuule järgi seadma, pärivoolu ujuma) (Wiedemann) ’drive on any sleigh (= follow your nose, go with the flow’); Ta on kurjas reess (= kurjas kambas) (EKMS II 559) ’He is on an evil sleigh (= in bad crowd’)

Supposedly, the initial focus of the phrase läheb nagu lepase ~ lepse reega was the type of wood that the sleigh was made from. Estonians used to have rather conflicting attitudes towards alder. In Estonian folk religion alder was considered a sacred tree (cf. Pühalepa ’Sacred Alder’ parish on Hiiumaa Island); magic attributed to alder was used in folk medicine and as a means of protective magic (see Hiiemäe 2004 : 20ff). On the other hand, alder was criticized for being too soft and non-resistant and has been called pasklepp ’crap alder’, seatamm ’pig oak’. At the same time, alder has
been valued for the softness: its carvability made it a good raw material for carving household utensils, especially milk and butter vessels, bowls, etc. Alder was good for smoking meat or fish. Its reddish bark and timber were widely used natural colorants; this quality has given Estonians words like kalačep ‘fish blood’ (lit. ‘fish alder’), lepame ‘bloody’ (lit. ‘aldery’), leppama, lepitama ‘dye red’ (lit. ‘to alder’), lepp ‘red horse’ (lit. ‘alder’, ESMA), lepalind, lepatrīnu ‘lady bird’ (lit. ‘alder bird’). Nevertheless, alder’s useful qualities have not materialized in Estonian phraseology. Furthermore, in phrases connected with sleigh, lepame, lepe ‘lit. alder’ has negative implications at least up to the second half of the past century. The negative meaning of this image is expected, because sleighs and parts of sleighs were predominantly made of stronger woods like birch, ash, oak, fir root wood (see Viires 1980: 38–39, 60), etc. and not the relatively soft alder. For the pragmatic countryfolk, the impracticality of using alder for making more resistant items was probably an argument good enough for using alder to mark something poor, inadequate, weak, miserable, etc. (see Examples 19–20) (Vakk 1984: 6, 7).

(19) Vastseliina No mista käu, lät t kah kui lepatsereega ‘What’s there to say, it goes as on an alder sleigh’; Jöelätmetme Sai vedada lepatsereega (= sälpigata) ‘Could pull on the alder sleigh (= could mock)’; Laiuse nagu lepse reega üle söitinud (= halvasti ja pealiskaudelt tehtud töö) ‘as if run over by an alder sleigh (= inadequately done work)’; nagu lepse reega edasi minema (= viiletsalt edasi jõudma) (Wiedemann) ‘move on as on an alder sleigh (= proceed slowly)’; Tartu-Maarja sōidab nagu lepatsereega halva tiiga: viis päeva ja kolm versta ‘rides as on an alder sleigh on a bad road: five days and three versts’; Märjamaa Kui keegi teist pilkas selle kohta öeldi, vedas teist lepaksė rega ‘If a person mocked someone else, it was said that he pulled the other one on an alder sleigh’; Viru-Jaagupi läks nagu lepise reega (lepas ei tee ju keegi rege ja see ei püsi, kuid vördlusel püstit see räpase töö kohta) ‘went as on an alder sleigh (no one makes a sleigh from alder wood, and it wouldn’t hold, but it is used for comparison about some dirty job)’

(20) Kuusalu üks kruul lepans, teine lehmaste see (≈ kelle mõistus pole täiesti korras) ‘one screw from a l d e r, another of cow dung (= screws are loose)’; Lüganuse On leppase kriviga (≈ puuduliku mõistusega) ‘has an a l d e r screw (= is witless)’; Lisaku See on ju leppase nikastranud nupuga ‘This one has a stupid a l d e r head on his/her shoulders (referring to a simpleton who made idle conversation)’; Jõhvi Sie öli ikke suuta leppane. Terve pere niisiokesed leppase d (≈ nõrga, vähese mõistusega) ‘This one was completely a l d e r y. The whole family was a l d e r y (= slow-witted, brainless)’.

In modern times the image of the expression läheb nagu lepase ~ lepse reega rather focuses on the sleigh, and as noted above, the phrase now carries quite an opposite connotation ‘goes well, smoothly, without problems, advances well’ (see EKSS V 53; Õim 1993: 210). The image has been reconceptualized relatively recently; this has been favoured by the aban-
donment of the folk religious worldview and changes in the collective mentality in the final decades of the 19th century, according to Mall Hiiemäe (2004 : 21). Even Feliks Vakk, who has investigated the etymology of Estonian phraseology in greater detail, has not been able to cast light upon this matter on the basis of earlier linguistic theories. F. Vakk (see 1984 : 6—8) argued that the most likely reason was simply the image being abandoned in use. Folklore Archives at the Estonian Literary Museum (Tartu) store manuscript material, dated from the late 19th to early 20th century, in which the expression was used both for things going well or badly, and in some cases in its transitional stage ‘quickly, though not properly’. In the first half of the 20th century, the meaning of the phrase held by Modern Estonian speakers comes to prevail; however, the original content of the phrase has been longer preserved in the South-Estonian language area (see Examples 21—13).

(21) Lisaku (1889) lähäb nagu leppase riega (kui üks asi õige libedast lähäb) ‘goes as on an alder sleigh (when something is going very smoothly)’; Vastseliina, Setu (1894) lätt kui lepätse reega (= halv elokörd) ‘went as on an alder sleigh (= poor life course)’; Tartu-Maarja (1901) Ta sōidab nīgu lepātsē riiga halva tiiga: viis päeva ja kolm versta ‘He rides as on an alder sleigh on a bad road: five days and three versts’

(22) Paistu (1937) läheb kui lepise reega (kui ruttu lohakat tööd tehakse) ‘goes as on an alder sleigh (when something is done quickly and sloppily)’

(23) Hargla (1932) Ta lätsnīk ku lepadšē riiga (kui midagi halvasti on tehtud) ‘He went as if on an alder sleigh (when something’s been poorly done)’

Attempt has been made to explain the change in connotation in the framework of cognitive linguistics: relying on the context system and the the cognitive motivation of motion event. Central in this aspect is motion and its evaluation.

3. The conceptual domain of the phrase läheb nagu lepase ~ lepse reega

3.1. Spatial relations and motion

It is common knowledge that one of the most basic movements of a human is moving one’s body on the vertical and/or horizontal axis. For instance, prototypical walking starts with standing up, resting on two feet, means walking around in the room and ends by arriving to the destination and standstill (see also, e.g., Lemmens 2004 : 5).

Concepts based on spatial relations are located in the core of our conceptual system (further on this in Estonian see Luuk 2008 : 954ff ). These are applied by means of perceptual and conceptual systems but, of course, are perceived quite differently than one would perceive physical objects. Most spatial relationships are complex; the elementary structure of spatial relationships involve image schema, source, trajectory and landmark, i.e. figure and ground (see e.g. Lakoff, Johnson 1999 : 30, 31). For instance, the basis of the numerous meanings of Estonian adpositions üle ‘over, across’ and
peale 'above’ are the possible image schemas of ROAD, COVERING, and VERTICAL perspective (see Veismann 2004; 2006).

Spatial logic is also characteristic of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema which enables us to understand our own motion or the motion of any other object. The spatial relations have been implicitly incorporated in the schema:

— if you traverse a route, you have been at all locations along the route;
— if you travel from A to B and B to C, you have travelled from A to C;
— if you can go directly from A to B and you are moving along the path towards B then you are approaching B;
— if X and Y are travelling along a direct route from A to B and X passes Y, then X is further from A and closer to B than Y is;
— If X and Y are driving directly from A to B and X passes Y, then X is further away from A and closer to B than Y. (Lakoff, Johnson 1999 : 33ff; see also Johnson 1990 : 113, 114)

While our conceptual system most likely employs the important parts of our sensorimotor processes (Lakoff, Johnson 1999 : 38, 39) then according to Srini Naranayan’s (1997) motor schemas, the model of aspect and metaphor, all motor schemas share the same high-level structure. Any higher level motor activity involves

— enabling,
— inception process,
— (imminent or ongoing) in-process,
— possibility of completion,
— possibility of reiteration,
— possibility of resumption,
— monitoring the achievement of goal,
— completive process,
— completion.

In principle, the model characterizes the semantic structure or aspect of events. The same nerve patterns that control motion may characterize the conceptual structure of aspect. The same nerve mechanisms that control physical motion may help drawing logical conclusions on our actions in genera (Lakoff, Johnson 1999 : 41, 42; 581, 582)

Depending on the diachronically earlier but also later meaning of the phrase läheb nagu lepase reega, the focus of this article is not only the image schema of PATH but also the schema HORIZONTALITY (which for an individual is perhaps most clearly manifest in laying down (see Lemmens 2006 : 266ff)) and the clear boundaries of the activity (see Example 24). Since there is sensory and motor correspondence between the terrain of landscape and the physical balance of the mover, the expression also requires understanding BALANCE.

(24) Esimese päeva jooks reedel oli lühike ja kiire: 10 kilomeetrit s u j u s tänu kodusele toidule ja hästi läbi mõeldud treeningule n a g u l e - p a s e r e e g a 'On Friday, the race of the first day was short and rapid: ten kilometres passed thanks to homemade cooking and carefully planned training a s o n a n a l d e r s l e i g h'; Väljas on pea +7, lumi läheb n a g u l e p a s e r e e g a üle Eesti, ehh
It's nearly +7 degrees outside; the snow goes as on an alder sleigh across Estonia, and perhaps Haanja is the only place that upholds; Meie lombine asfalt kipub päriss tihti hilissügisel õoseks jätuma ja siis läheb nagu lepase reega 'Here, the puddles on asphalt often freeze in late autumn nights and then it goes as on an alder sleigh'; Kui kasutusel on uuem Windows ja Internet Explorer, peaks kõik sõjumad automaatsest nagu lepase reega 'If you're using more recent Windows and Internet Explorer, then everything should go automatically, as on an alder sleigh'; Enne valimisi ei olnud mingit sisulist debatti siseturvalisuse üle, kõik oli kuidagi korras, rahulik ja vaikne ning laks just kui lepase reega. 'Before the elections there was essentially no debate over internal security; everything was somehow fine, peaceful and quiet and went as on an alder sleigh'.

In this case, HORIZONTALITY is manifested first and foremost by means of GOAL and PATH. Quite naturally, humans have an immense experience of continuous motion on the horizontal direction: on this direction the activity may last, change, reverse, which in Estonian, for example, is confirmed by the abstract meanings of adverbs of horizontal direction (see Veismann, Tragel 2008 : 521ff). This does not mean, however, that the horizontal direction lacks the possibility of aspect. Even though the expression läheb nagu lepase reega seems to mainly refer to an on-going progress, the semantic context often implies effectiveness or completion. In Estonian language, the result of activity can be expressed by embedded instruments of different levels of language, for instance, causativity: nuttis end magama 'cried himself to sleep', laps karjus end higiseks 'the child cried until it sweated', with a verb valence: töötati õhtuni 'they worked until late nights', raamat lagunes kapsaks 'the book read to rags', tõusid kõrgele 'risen high', asetas taha 'put behind', mattis kinni 'buried in' (Эслон, Пихлак 1993 : 50, 51).

3.2. Event evaluation

Perception and interpretation of events very often involves a tacit evaluation of the quality or results of an activity. All our actions can be attributed an aim: the aim of a career is to get a good job and earn a lot of money, the aim of a competition is to win, and so on (Langlotz 2006 : 144). Actions as well as the chosen MEANS and METHODS help to achieve or at least approach a set goal. If these means and methods are adequate and the performance is of quality, the activity can become successful. Whether the activity results in SUCCESS, PROGRESS or FAILURE is determined by additional positive or negative factors, such as HELP and SUPPORT, PROBLEMS and INTERFERENCES, also the EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES of the activity.

SUCCESS and FAILURE evaluate the result of the activity or the status achieved through it. If the goal has been reached, we will be successful; if not, we have most likely failed. PROGRESS, STAGNATION and REGRESSION evaluate the temporal movement of the activity. If we are approaching the aim, things are going well; if not, we speak about stagnation or regression. Since progressing activity is likely to lead to a positive result, progress is conven-
tionally associated with success, then stagnation and regression imply failure (Langlotz 2006: 145). Andreas Langlotz has studied on the basis of the Collins Cobuild Dictionary of Idioms 600 idioms from the Corpus of British English which meaning referred to success, achievement or failure. Most of these phrases can be related to six general source domains: COMPETITION, STRUGGLE, LIFE, EATING, PHYSICAL MOVEMENT and MACHINE, the specific structures and ontologies of which are mapped onto the SUCCESS, PROGRESS and FAILURE target domain in order to structure, conceptualize and concretize it. The following general domain presented in Figure 2 thus works as an abstract conceptual base relative to which the concepts of SUCCESS and PROGRESS versus FAILURE, STAGNATION and REGRESSION derive their semantic values (Langlotz 2006: 145).

3.3 Possible motivation and structure of motion event

Expressions such as nagu lepase reega and others belonging to the same part of spatial and motion system are clearly motivated by conceptual metaphors CHANGE IS MOTION and PROGRESS, DEVELOPMENT IS PHYSICAL MOVEMENT, which may be shaped by metonymic links, emblematic associations and conceptual blending (see Langlotz 2006: 148). Any human interpretation of events and causes is mainly based on the complex metaphor EVENT STRUCTURE. At the same time, events and aspects of it (activities, causes, changes, conditions, aims, etc.) may be conceptualized through locations or objects (see Examples 25 and 26, respectively).

(25) Kaotajate poolel hoidisomaatimepeal Martti Varusk 26 punktiga ’Among the losing team, Martti Varusk kept the team on the sleigh with the score of 26’

4 On differentiation between worldly knowledge and cultural knowledge, see e.g. Piirainen 2008.
Võtta tere. Eestis näib valitsevat arvamus, et meie talupidajatel õnnestub Euroopa Liidus ellu jääda ainult suurtootmise abil. Take another train. The prevalent opinion in Estonia seems to be that our farmers would survive only by being involved in major production in the European Union.

Here the numerous experience and knowledge that we have about moving in a space become useful. In both cases, primary metaphors causes are power and change is motion are used (Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 178, 179).

According to location event structure metaphor:
- states are locations (bounded regions in space);
- changes are movements (into or out of bounded regions);
- causes are forces;
- actions are self-propelled movements;
- purposes are destinations;
- means are paths to destinations;
- difficulties are impediments to motion;
- expected progress is a travel schedule;
- a schedule is a virtual traveller, who reaches pre-arranged destinations at pre-arranged times;
- external events are large, moving objects;
- long-term, purposeful activities are journeys (Lakoff 2006: 204; Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 178, 179).

What specific conclusions can be drawn from this? It is commonly known that achieving success first begins by departing from the starting point (see Example 27; about the encoding of the starting point of motion in Estonian see Pajusalu, Kahusk, Veismann, Vider, Õim 2008: 7—11). The start of an activity can be difficult and lead to failure because the chosen method or direction of development is wrong or too ambitious. Therefore it is often advisable to start slowly (Example 28) (Langlotz 2006: 157, 158).

According to the starting block of regaining independence

Sõi selle ära ja aser i-v e e r i-küsis, et kas äikki oleks veel 'He ate all this and hesitantly (lit. 'hedged') asked if he could have more'

From this point on, the success of the activity depends on the chosen path, which, in turn, is closely intermingled with manner (see Pajusalu, Kahusk, Orav, Veismann, Vider, Õim 2008: 11). The source concept path structures two distinct dimensions in the target domain of development: the direction and the quality of the circumstances in which a given configuration develops. Clearly, a path that leads to the desired destination is favourable to the successful development of the configuration, otherwise inefficient or counterproductive (cf. Examples 29, 30) (Langlotz 2006: 158).

Torma Naiseisa avitas ta õtsa pialle. Nüüd tal omal loomakari laadas 'Father-in-law helped him [get] to the start. Now he has his own herd of cattle in the barn'
Efektiivsuse suurendamine pole iseenesest vale, aga ainult sellele kes-kendumine on pikas perspektiivis ummiiktee 'Enhancing effectiveness is not exactly wrong, but focusing only on it is a dead end (lit. 'dead end path') in the long run'

Proceeding from the logic behind this metaphorization, it becomes clear that in Example 31 the agent is deviating from the right path, i.e. the cause of failure (see further Öim 2007). Keeping oneself on the path expresses successful development and the likelihood of positive development in choosing a new path (see Examples 32, 33). (Langlotz 2006 : 158)

Lugu allakäinud maadlejast, kelle elu rõõbasest on sõitnud 'A tale of a run-down wrestler, whose life has fallen off the tracks'

Sebastien Loeb jätab ka pärast teist võistluspäeva kursil Küprose ralli võidu suunas 'After the second day of race Sebastian Loeb continues on the course of victory on Cypros rally'; Seni andsime abi rea p e a l s e i s m i s e k s, nüüd koolitus enam tule-vikku suunatud. 'Until now we have aided people to stand on the row, whereas now the course is more oriented to the future'

Peamine stiimul tõusuks saadi asjaolust, et musta kullaa hind pööras otsa r ingi 'The main impetus for the rise came from the fact that the price of black gold turned around'

To concretize the favourable or unfavourable circumstances in which an activity takes place, the quality of the path is highlighted: a smooth constitution of the path marks progress and guarantees success (see Example 34). Development is impeded and failure is likely to occur if the path is difficult, dangerous or unpleasant and calls for an action to ensure success (Examples 35, 36) (Langlotz 2006 : 158).

Tema elutee on olud üsna sile 'His life's path has been rather smooth'

Kuusalu Kui mõni sandiste loeb, see läheb na üle küngaste puha 'If one cannot read very well, it is a bumpy ride'; Kodavere Mõne lugemine one nõnnagu sõödi künkmine, mukko jajatab 'Some person's reading is like ploughing a fallow field, only bumps along the path'; Saarde nagu regi liiva peal kimni (= kimnine vöi saamatu oma töösi või teos) 'as a sleigh stuck in sand (= self-contained or inadequate in work or activity)'; See on tüüpilise emocio-naalse liialdaja käekiri, kes loogiliste argumentite puudumisel on a s unud demagoogia l i b e d a l e t e e l e 'This is a typical pattern of someone whose excessively emotional and with a lack of logical arguments has stepped on the slippery path of demagogy'; Ei see kristlase tee pole sile ja sirge 'The path of a Christian is neither smooth or straight'

Kõik see sillutab Linuxiteed UNIXi asendamisel 'All this paves Linux's road to replacing UNIX'; Liikmesriikide kohustus kõrvaldada ta kistused elektrooniliste lepingute kasu-
The obligation of Member States is to remove hurdles from using contracts in electronic form.

Movement along the path towards the destination implies approaching the goal. The more distance is covered the closer success becomes, even if special efforts have to be made (see Example 37). If the movers are very fast and competitive (see Purposeful activity is a race) they may arrive at the destination long before others. And conversely, development stagnates or regresses if the agent is not moving forward or moves in circles (Example 38) (Langlotz 2006: 158, 159).

(37) Pärnu Finantskonverents on lähtud, täpsemalt nädala pärast 17.—18. aprillil Pärnu Financial Conference is close, more precisely, in a week on 17—18 April; Tänu kaubanduse jõudul võidakse looda ehitajad, et investeering tette algul vähikäigu. Owing to the remarkable progress in commercial activities, building contractors hope that the investment will make up (i.e. will be remunerated) within two or three years.’

From the agent’s viewpoint, success is ensured by the constitution of the limbs or coordinated movement. In Example 39 metaphorical transfer (development is walking forward) is combined with metonymic transfer (leg/foot for ability to walk). Failing is understood as stumbling, failing or uncoordinated movement (Example 40).

(39) Torma Seda, et ta oli kergel jala, võeti arvesse ametisse kinnitamisel ‘It was taken into consideration at job application that she had a light foot’; Lisaku See majapidamine löökib kahel jalaga ‘This household limps on two lamel legs’

A traveller depends on footgear or can make use of a vehicle to support his or her getting on. Some idioms make explicit reference to certain vehicle domains, depending on the concrete journey frame underlying a given idiomatic construction. This source domain is mapped onto conceptual elements (efficient means or methods, help or favourable situations) in the target domain that are conceived as supporting successful progressing. The resulting metaphor supporting basis of development is a vehicle thus concretizes the idea that the development becomes more efficient if it is...
aided by favourable external influences. Boarding or not boarding the vehicle correlates with taking or not taking an opportunity (see Example 41). Once the vehicle is in motion, plenty of distance can be covered in a short time and thus progress is guaranteed; whereas successful development is impeded when the vehicle stops moving properly or effectively (Example 42). Therefore, it is necessary to adapt the vehicle to the external conditions rather than to spoil one’s chances of success by taking inappropriate or inefficient means or methods, problems or developmental situations, or else the vehicle must be abandoned (Example 43) (Langlotz 2006 : 159, 160).

(41) Kohvitehas surfa staas lainele 'The coffee plant resurfed on the wave'; Kes on aidanud paljudel sõltlastel tagasiree peale saada 'He who has helped many addicts get back on the sleigh'; Kuigi Euroopa Liit meenutab pahathti varju-teatrit, oleme lunastanud pileti stabiilisesse mõnusasses rongi ja paanikaks pole põhjust, leiab Martin Kala 'Even though EU often evokes the image of a shadow theatre, we have obtained a ticket on a stable cosy train and there's no need to panic, Martin Kala argues'; Leedu jääb Schengeni rongist ma-ha 'Lithuania is missing the Schengen train'

(42) Tõstamai ei lähe enam regi ega ratas (sandi tee aegas) 'not the sleigh nor wheel will run (on a bad road)'; Kuusalu ei veere vanker ega jookse regi 'no carriage will ride nor sleigh will run'; Rapla. Märijamaa ei see kelk joose jaanipäävase jää peal 'the sleigh won't run on Midsummer ice (about he who wants to convince others into believing him)'

(43) Kruuda ja Kangur tõmbasid Aava MM-sõitule peale 'Kruuda and Kangur put the brake on Aava’s world championship races'; Mõistlik oleks rong peata da 'It would be wise to stop the train'

In addition to the poor quality of the road, uncoordinated movement or the inefficient use of a vehicle, the direct path to the destination may be impeded by obstacles, obstructions and danger. Obstacle concepts are mapped onto the target domain to mark problems: PROBLEMS ARE OBSTACLES. A dangerous journey, for example, is a sea voyage, where a ship is endangered by storms, underwater rocks and tides. The conceptual identification of water with instability/insecurity turns the crossing of an ocean into a risky endeavour. This knowledge is contained in phrases which characterize problems or difficult situations as potential dangers occurring on a sea voyage (see Example 44). MACHINE partly overlaps with transport VEHICLE in terms of evoking machine-powered vehicles as models for progress (Example 45) (Langlotz 2006 : 160, 161).

(44) Simuna Nii elulaev vahest karile jooksebki (= vahel läh-heb halvasti) 'So the ship of life is sometimes on the rocks (= sometimes you don't succeed)'; See on vaikusenne tormi: maja müüakse kiiresti ja vaiksesti Tallinna Hambapolikliinikuga ühes majas asuvale Kaarli Hambapolikliinikule 'This was silence before storm: the house is sold, quickly and quietly, to the Kaarli dental
The very basic image schemas serve as a source for making such structurally poor target domains as SUCCESS, PROGRESS or FAILURE concrete. Schemas of VERTICALITY, BALANCE etc. help to construct evaluative concepts such as GOOD or BAD, POSITIVE or NEGATIVE in terms of basic bodily experiences like spatial orientation and bodily equilibrium. In bodily experience, the sensory and motor sensation of equilibrium and disequilibrium is naturally correlated with the success or failure of a given activity. This serves as a fundamental basis for the metaphor POSITIVE/NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENT IS BALANCE/IMBALANCE. The BALANCE metaphor is closely linked to the DEVELOPMENT IS MOVEMENT metaphor. When we walk, our physical balance is directly influenced by the constitution of the terrain on which we move. This sensory and motor correlation partially motivates the constructs SECURITY/STABILITY IS SOLD GROUND; INSECURITY/INSTABILITY IS WATER; INSTABILITY/UNCERTAINTY IS AIR (Langlotz 2006 : 161ff)

Conclusion

The Estonian phrase läheb nagu lepase reega, which development may be dated according to the adoption of the corresponding vehicle in Estonia, is highly common in Modern Estonian, both in oral and written communication. Originally, the phraseological image probably focused on the material that the sleigh was made from and the phrase had a negative connotation (‘go badly, fail’ or similar) like most other sleigh-related idiomatic phrases. Within a relatively short period of time, the image has come to focus on the vehicle and the meaning has become positive (‘go/proceed well, succeed’ etc.). Attitudes towards alder have definitely influenced the reconceptualization of the phrase, but we have attempted to search for the reasons for this change in meaning from the image formation context and the motivation of motion event.

The vertical and/or horizontal movement of human body or any other object can be conceptualized through the SOURCE-PATH-GOAL image schema arranged according to a clear spatial logic. Since people arguably use important parts of their sensorimotor system for constructing conceptual system, it is possible that all motor schemas have the same high-level structure. The same nerve structures that control motion may characterize the semantic structure of event. Perception and interpretation of events according to the EVENT STRUCTURE metaphor may entail a tacit evaluation of the quality or results of the activity. Performing an activity serves to achieve a set goal or develop towards it. The outcome of the activity, whether it results in SUCCESS, PROGRESS or leads to FAILURE, may be influenced by the used MEANS and METHODS, HELP and SUPPORT, and PROBLEMS and INTERFERENCES that one may encounter in the process.
The relatively clear motivation of the Estonian phrase is triggered by conceptual metaphors CHANGE IS MOTION and PROGRESS, DEVELOPMENT IS FORWARD MOVEMENT. Proceeding from the PATH frame that the phrase is based on, the model explicitly employs TRANSPORT VEHICLE domain, which is mapped onto the conceptual target domain elements supporting progress: MEANS or METHODS, HELP or FAVOURABLE SITUATIONS. Development is enhanced by a supporting factor; thus, SUPPORT OF DEVELOPMENT IS TRANSPORT VEHICLE. Movement of the transport vehicle enables us to cover a long distance in a short period of time and this, in turn, guarantees progress; if the movement of the vehicle is impeded, then progress stops. Since achieving the goal or moving towards it is generally attributed positive value, then the negative meaning of the phrase analyzed in this article has been specially marked by an extension. The connotation of the modern conceptualizing of the phrase has once again reversed and this suggests that the extension of the noun is subject to a dominant interpretation, one that proceeds from the structure of motion event. These changes may have been influenced by the fact that the described and highly transparent motivation is rarely employed in Estonian language. TRANSPORT VEHICLE as a perhaps too concrete, poorly structured and rather ineffectual source domain concept has such a large semantic field that it holds sufficient space and possibilities for fundamental changes in meaning. Therefore, we can agree that the development of the phrase läheb nagu lepase reega in time has been completely systematic and reasonable. The presence of the finality aspect in the phrase in modern Estonian language confirms that the development of the phrase does not end here.

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Abbreviations

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КАЧЕСТВЕННОЕ ИЗМЕНЕНИЕ ВО ФРАЗЕОЛОГИИ: ОСНОВНЫЕ ПРИНЦИПЫ И КАТАЛИЗАТОРЫ

В статье рассматривается качественное изменение во фразеологии как естественная составляющая процесса языкового развития, обусловленная внутри- и внеязыковыми факторами. Закономерность изменений, которые происходят в значениях фразеологизмов, выясняется здесь на примере исторически старого генуинного выражения läheb nagu lepase reega букв. 'идет словно на дровнях из ольхи', хорошо известного в эстонских диалектах, разговорной речи и литературном языке. Значение этого фразеологизма претерпело наибольшие из возможных качественных изменений. Изначально в фокусе его образа был, вероятно, материал, из которого изготовлены дровни, и потому значение было негативным ('дела идут плохо' и т. п.). За сравнительно короткий промежуток времени выражение приобрело позитивное значение ('дела идут хорошо' и т. п.). Сравнительно ясную мотивацию фразы läheb nagu lepase reega обеспечивают понятийные матафоры ИЗМЕНЕНИЕ и
ПРОГРЕСС, РАЗВИТИЕ — ЭТО ДВИЖЕНИЕ ВПЕРЕД. Исходя из фрейма ПУТИ-ДВИЖЕНИЯ, ле-
жущего в основе рассматриваемого фразеологизма, здесь эксплицируется ТРАНС-
ПОРТНОЕ СРЕДСТВО. Названная область исхода переносится на элементы области
направления, которые поддерживают прогресс: СРЕДСТВА или МЕТОДЫ, ПОМОЩь
или БЛАГОПРИЯТСТВУЮЩИЕ СИТУАЦИИ. Поскольку достижение цели или движение
к ней вообще оценивается позитивно, здесь анализируется специальное маркиро-
вание (с помощью определения) в данной конструкции негативного значения. Се-
годня это выражение вновь известно нам и с противоположным значением, т. е.
имеет место подчинение существительного — второстепенного члена предложе-
ния — доминирующему толкованию, обусловленному структурой движения как
события. Может быть, этим изменениям способствовало то обстоятельство, что в
эстонском языке описательная, прозрачная мотивация в качестве оценочной при-
меняется крайне редко. То есть транспортное средство как, пожалуй, слишком
конкретное и обладающее скромной структурой исходное понятие в данном се-
матическом поле оставило достаточное пространство для столь принципиаль-
ных изменений значения.

Развитие описанного выражения еще не закончено, и свидетельствует об этом
сопряжение значения ограниченного аспекта с данным фразеологизмом в совре-
менном эстонском языке.