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# **The Lithuanian perfect from Bretkūnas' Bible until Facebook: a comparative study of two empirical sources**

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# Outline

- Perfect in Lithuanian and as a cross-linguistic gram type
- Data
- Perfects in Bretkūnas' Bible (BB)
- Perfects in Facebook comments (FB)
- Comparison and conclusions

# Perfect

A category which is used to express **events that took place before the temporal reference point but which have an effect on or are in some way still relevant at that point.**

Possible meanings/values:

- **Resultative**
- **Experiential**
- **Current relevance (CR)**
- **Universal**
- **Hot news**

(Dahl & Vellupilai 2013, Lindstedt 2000, Dahl&Hedin 2000)

# Perfect

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  - **Current relevance (CR)**
  - **Universal**
  - **Hot news**
- min. requirement for a gram  
to be defined as a Perfect

# Perfect

Cross-linguistic tendencies in the development of perfects:

lexical sources → resultatives → perfects → past time markers

(Dahl 1985, Bybee & Dahl 1989, Bybee et al. 1994, Lindstedt 2000, ...)

Possible meanings/values:

- Resultative
- Experiential
- Current relevance (CR)
- Universal
- Hot news
- Narrative



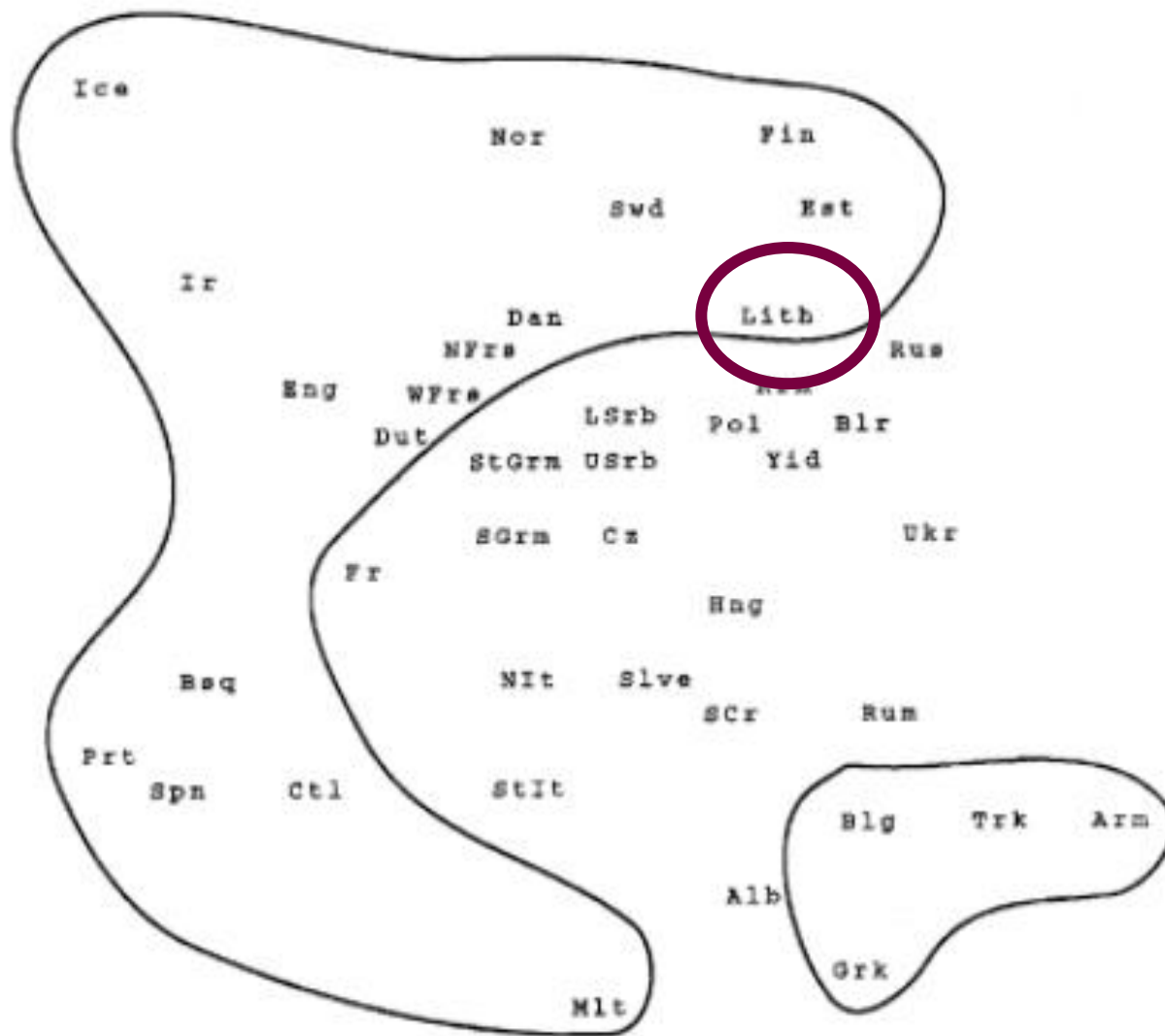
res. constr.



Perfect



Past tense



☞ stable present anterior ("maritime perfect")

# Lithuanian perfect

- Formed out of the optional auxiliary BŪTI ('to be') and a PAP (-ęs, -usi, -ę, -usios)
- Existing research on the topic – Arkadiev & Daugavet (2016):
  - A corpus-based comparative study of Lithuanian and Latvian perfects (LiLa parallel Lithuanian and Latvian corpus – literary works).
  - Perfect forms have been extracted by searching for PAP forms in *-usi* and by manually identifying non-negated auxiliaries (not only in the Present, but also in Past and Future) with PAPs. Bare participles and negated forms have not been analyzed.
  - The frequency of Perfects, Pluperfects and Future Perfects in Lithuanian is 1/6670.
  - Resultative and Experiential values are prominent (55% and 27% respectively), while CR perfects are marginal (18%).
- No corpus-based studies on the Old Lithuanian perfect (as far as I'm aware).

Has the Lithuanian perfect stayed the same since the first written documents in Lithuanian until now? Or have there been any changes?

# Data

## Bretkūnas' Bible

- One of the first Bible translations to Lithuanian
- Considered to be relatively free from source language influence
- Translated around 1590
- Certain parts available transcribed in *seniejirastai.lt* database:  
Lamentations, Proverbs, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Judges, Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Job

## Facebook comments

- One of the most up-to-date genres
- Extremely widespread
- Representative partially of the spoken language
- Freely available online
- Comments extracted using *Facepager* software from LRT.LT (Lithuanian national broadcaster) Facebook page

# Data

## Advantages:

- A comparison between radically different registers and time periods will surely show the changes, if there are any.
- Arkadiev & Daugavet 2016: a corpus-based study on perfect in written standard Lithuanian, however, no such studies on other language varieties or Old Lithuanian texts.

## Disadvantages:

- Any changes found might be due to either a diachronic change or to sociolinguistic variation
- The samples used in this study is very small – to get reliable results a larger study would be required

# Bretkūnas' Bible (BB) perfects

- Corpus size – 227 k words
- Number of perfects in the sample – 67
- Frequency of perfects – 1/3380 words

(cfr. Arkadiev & Daugavet 2016, where the frequency of perfects identified in the Lithuanian National Corpus is 1/6670 words)

- All perfects are formed with AUX (cfr. contemporary language where it is optional)

# BB perfects: semantic values

- ATR: 18%

PAP in what looks like a perfect construction is lexicalized and can also be considered as performing an attributive function.

*Kas ira teip æklas kaip mana tarnas, ir kas **ira** teip **apkurzens**, kaip mana Pallas?*

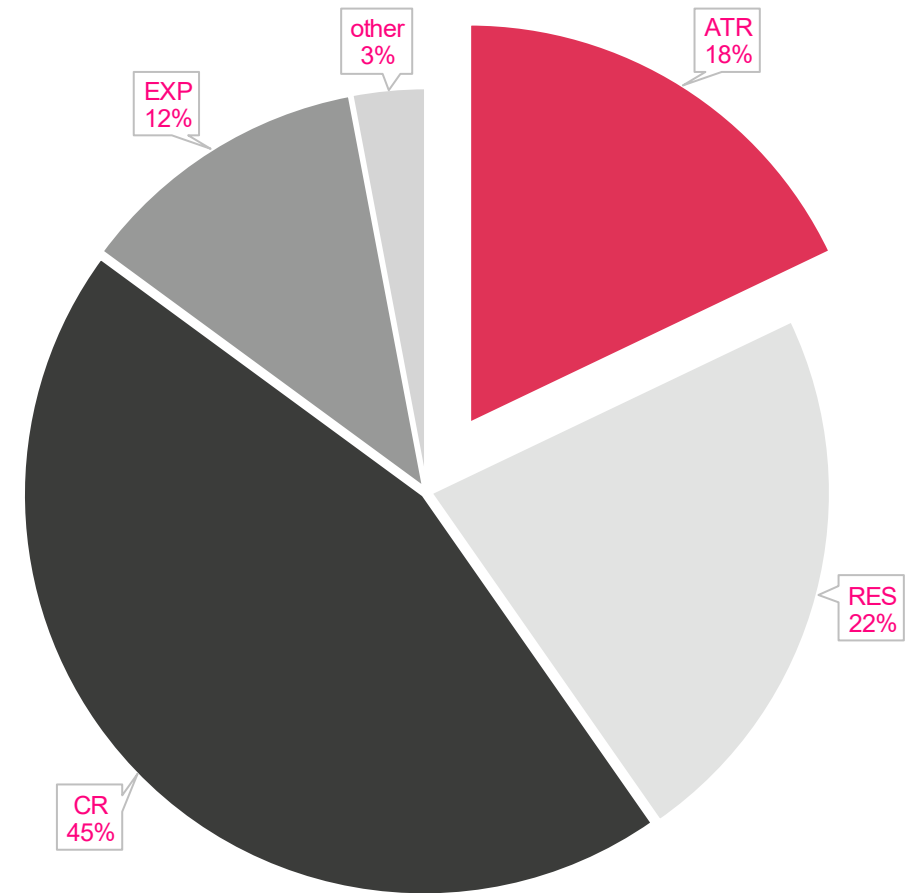
*‘Who is as blind as my servant, and as **deaf** as my messenger?’*

*[...] kaip įtrofchkuſiam ſapnije regifsi, gęrens, o pabudens, **efti apalpens** ir **įtrofchkens**.*

*‘[...] as when a thirsty person dreams of drinking, but awakens **faint** and **thirsty** still.’*

*Kurfai kitu kieliu waikſchczoij, tas **jra ifchkripęs**, bet kas waikſchczoij ſawa prifakime, to darbas tikras ira.*

*‘The way of the guilty is **devious**, but the conduct of the innocent is upright.’*



■ ATR ■ RES ■ CR ■ EXP ■ other

# BB perfects: semantic values

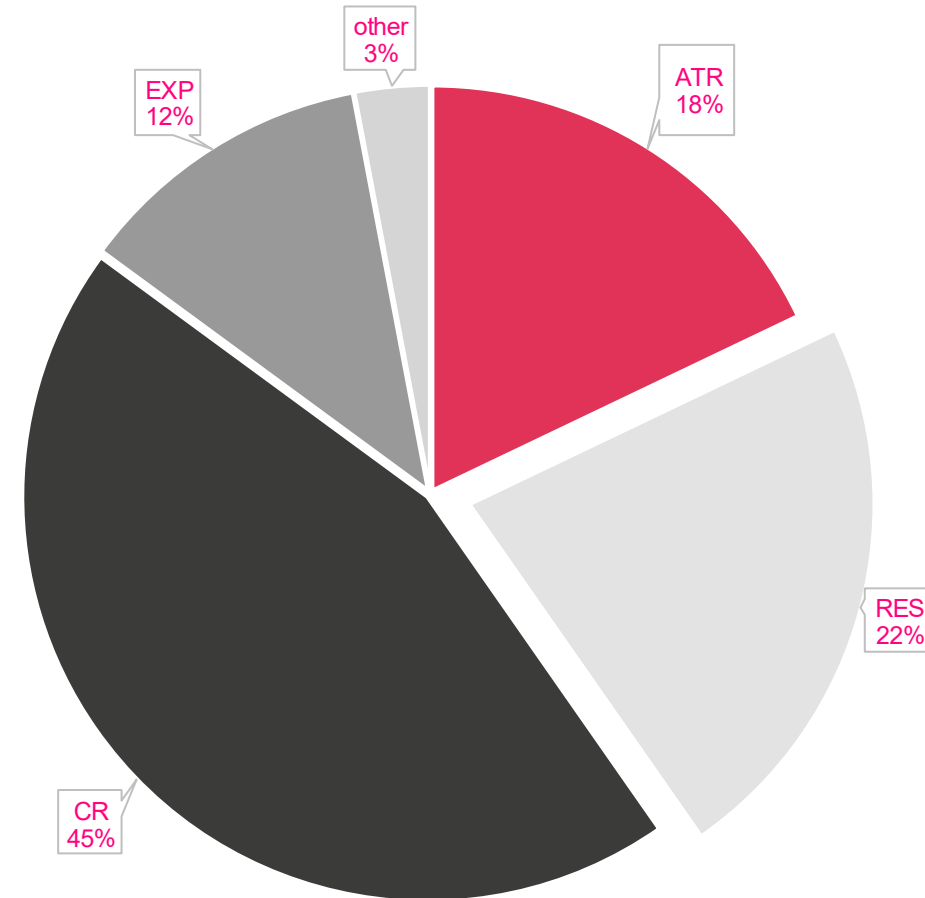
- RES: 22% Subject-oriented resultative – with **intransitive telic** verbs, denoting some kind of change or result on the subject that holds true at reference time.

*Weifdekite Abrahamama iufu Tiewa, ir Sara, nog kurios gime elte.*  
'Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who **has given** you birth.'

*Teip PONE, mes, mufu karalei, mufu kunigaikfchtei ir mufu Tiewai, turrim gedities, iog prifch tawe fugriefchie efme.*  
'We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, Lord, because we **have sinned** against you.'

*Szindanczio liebuwis prilipens ira padangije delei troschkulio.*  
'Because of thirst the infant's tongue **has stuck** to the roof of its mouth.'

*Prieg tam ir Ichie ifch wino pafiuta, ir fwirdineij ifch girto Gerimmo, Nefa bei Plebonai bei Pranaifchai ira pafiute ifch girto Gerimmo, wine ira nufkende.*  
'And these also stagger from wine and reel from the drunken drink, Priests and prophets stagger from the drunken drink and **have drowned** in wine.'



# BB perfects: semantic values

- CR: 45%

Perfect of current relevance – with transitive telic verbs, affecting the object or both the object and the subject.

*Efch geribes PONO atminfiu, ir liaupfes PONO, wifsame ka mumus PONas darens ira.*

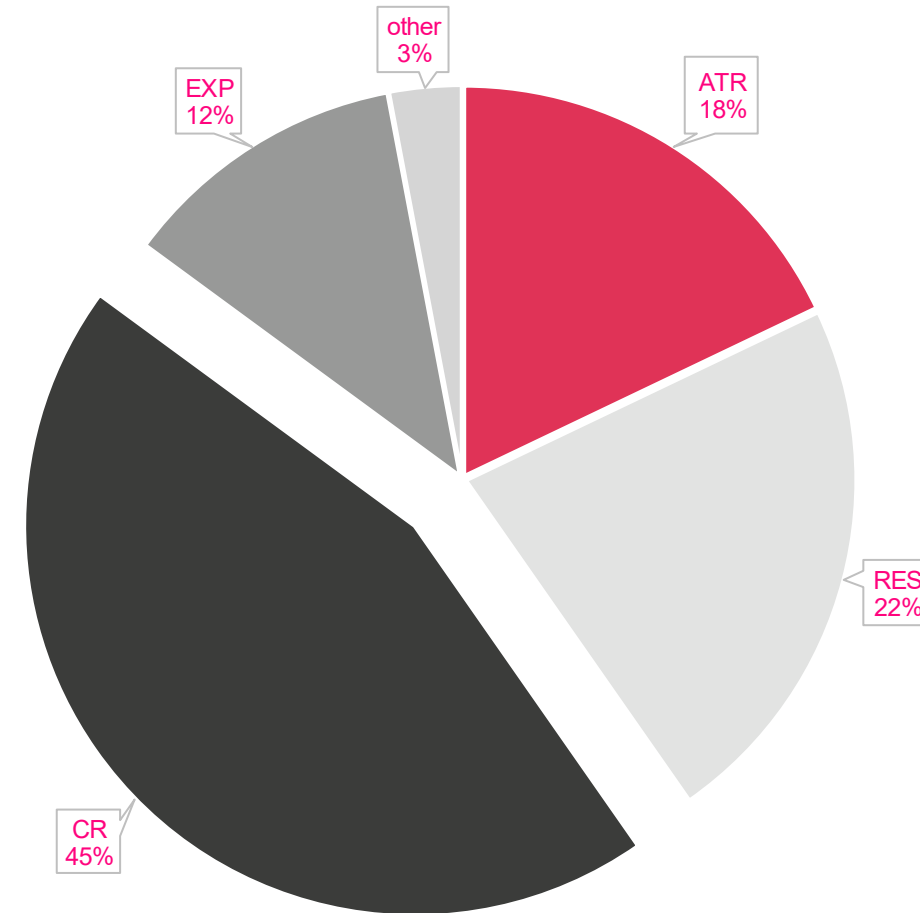
*‘I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD, according to all the LORD has done for us.’*

*Ir wifsi lauuko mædei ifchtirs iog efch PONas anā aukfchta mædi paßemineş, ir anā Szema mædi paaukfchtinens elmi, Ir ßali mædi ifchdzowinnens bei faufa mædi ßall{i}u padarens elmi.*

*‘All the trees of the forest will know that I the Lord have brought down the tall tree and have made the low tree grow tall. I have drought up the green tree and have made the dry tree flourish.’*

*Todelei, iog ghis tikrai ir gerai darens, ir wifsa mana Tiefa laikens bei darens efti, todelei giwens.*

*‘Since he has behaved justly and righteously, and has kept and fulfilled all my decrees, he will live.’*



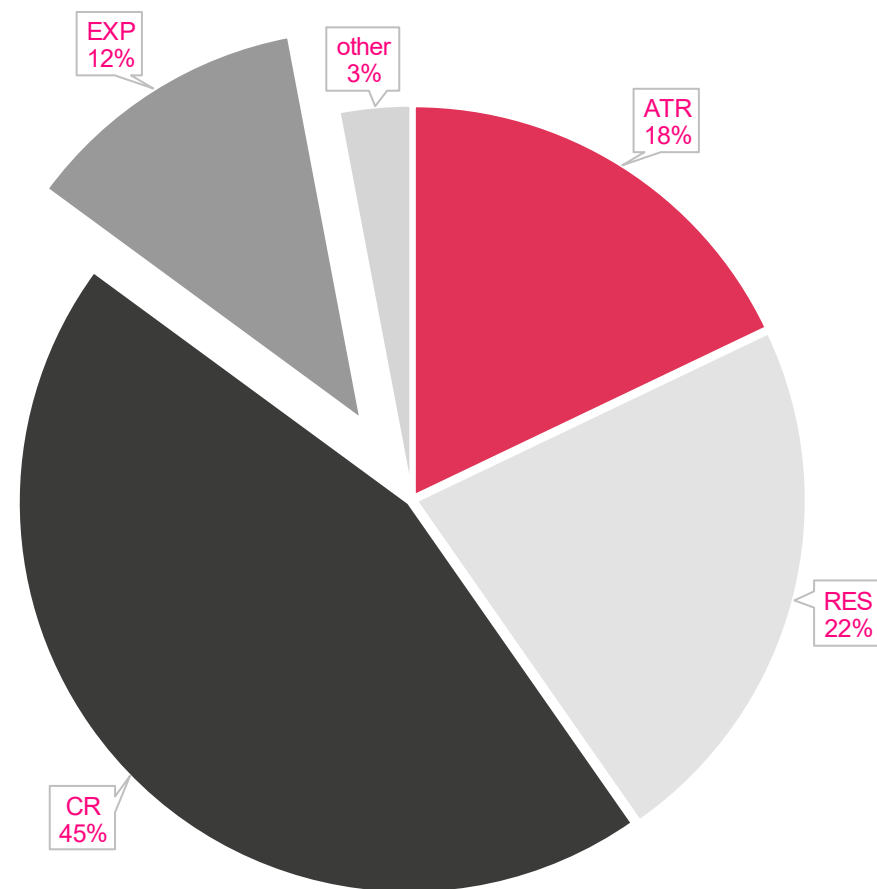
# BB perfects: semantic values

EXP 12% - formed with atelic intransitive verbs.  
Conveys an **event** that has occurred at least **once** during an **interval** ending at reference point.

*Ir Gentis diaku, kurie laebeze **giwena ira**, ira Thireathitai, [...]*  
*and the clans of scribes who **have lived** at Jabez are the Tirathites, [...]*

*Er ne padaricziau efch Ierufolimai ir io Deiwiems, kaip efch Samariai ir ios Deiwems **darens efmi**?*  
*Would I not treat Jerusalem and his gods how I **have treated** Samaria and her goddesses?*

*Bei iei tu po mana akim giwenfi, kaip tawa Tiewas Dowidas **giwēnens ira**, tadda efch Krefla tawa karaliftoš paštiprinfiu, kaip tawam Tiewui Dowidui **βadeiens efmi**.*  
*But if you live under my eye, as David your farther **has lived**, then I will establish your royal throne, as I **have promised** to David your farther.*



■ ATR ■ RES ■ CR ■ EXP ■ other

# BB perfects: semantic values

- 1 'hot news' perfect

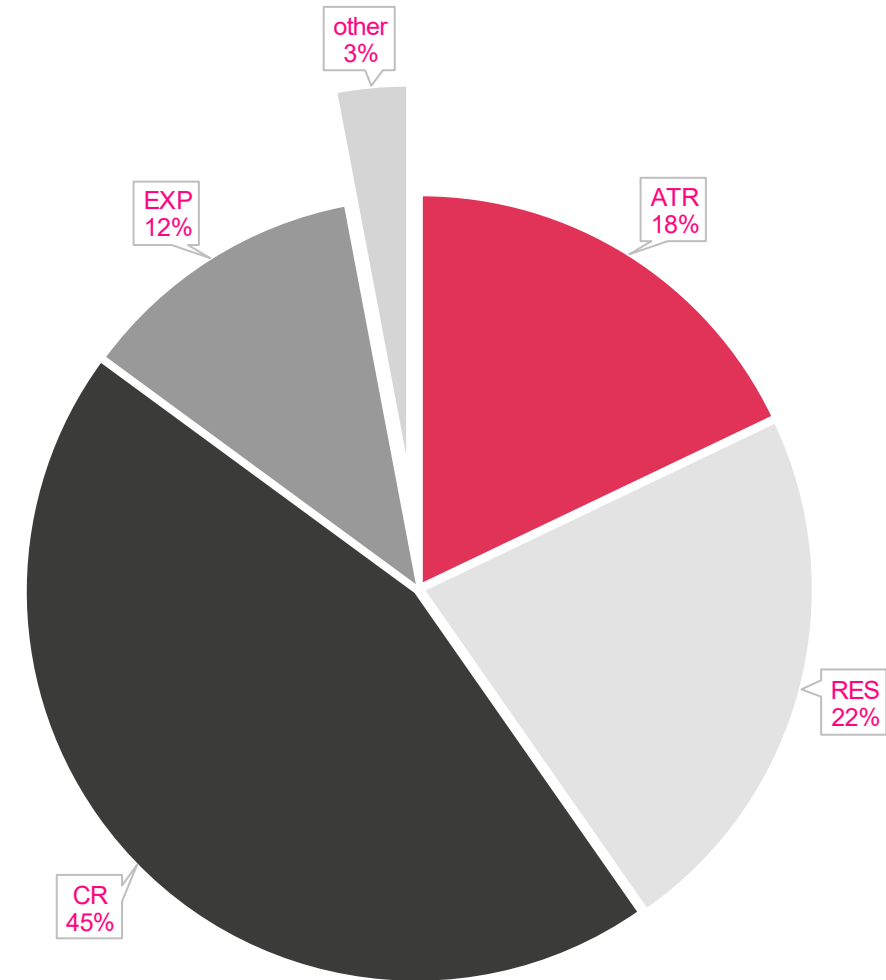
*Potam atwere Hiobas fawa Burnā, ir prakeike fawa diena bilodams, tha diena teprapūla, kurioie efch gimens efmi, Ir Naktis, kurioie fake, Wirifchkis **efi prafsideiens**.*

*'After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth saying, "May the day of my birth perish, and the night that said, 'A boy **has been conceived!**'"*

- 1 universal perfect

*Ira Szilli ir Senni tarp mufu, kurie ilgiaus **ira giwene**, nei tawa Tiewai.*

*'There are the gray-haired and the aged on our side, who **have lived** longer than your fathers.'*



■ ATR ■ RES ■ CR ■ EXP ■ other

# BB perfects: corrections

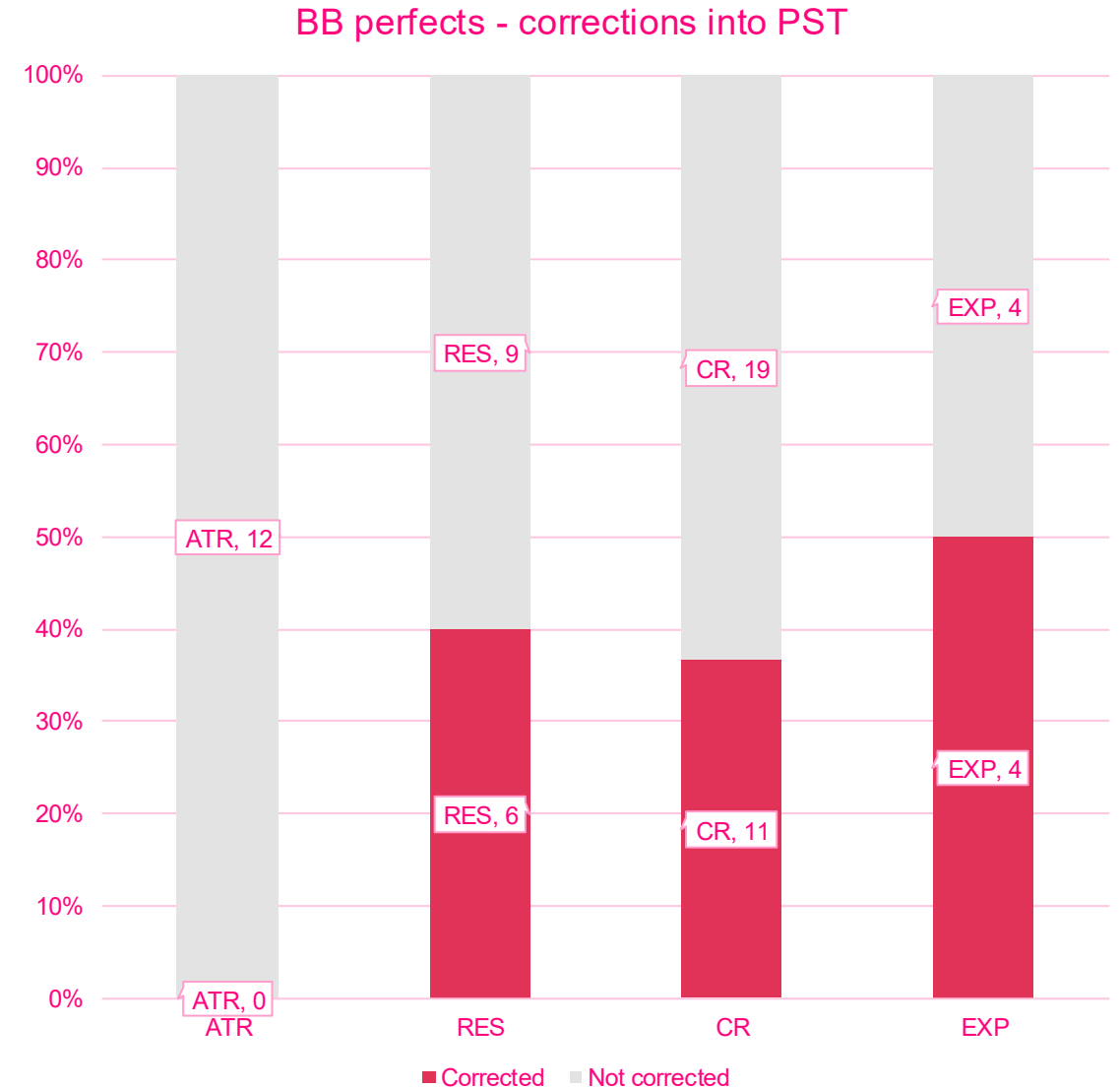
A significant part (approx. 1/3) are crossed out and substituted with the past tense, ex.:

*Todelei, iog ghis tikrai ir gerai <darens, →> <darens, |ira -,| →> dare, ir wisa mana Tiesa <laikens →> laike bei <darens efti -→> dare, todelei giwens.*

*Ir kadangi tu toktai prifch ios <kalbeiens efsi → kalbeiuli efsi -→> kalbe |iei|, ir tu teipaieg nuweltas bufi.*

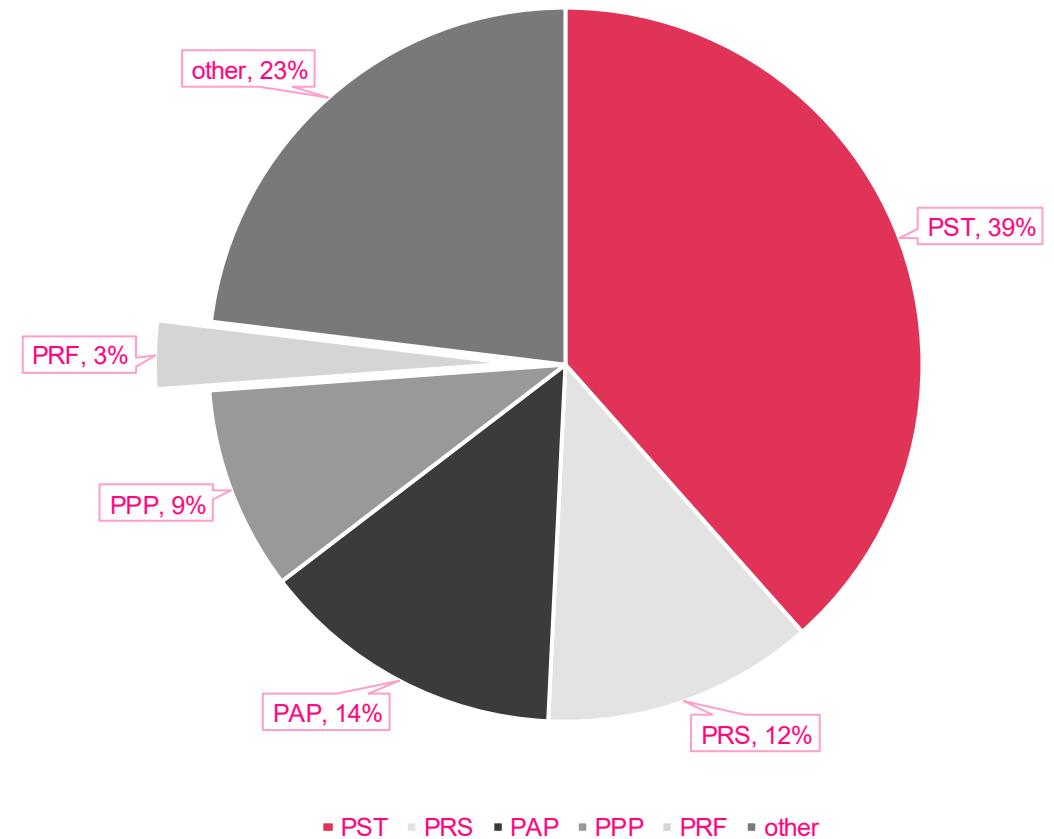
Which ones are they?

- None of the MOD structures
- Approx. 1/2 of the other types



# BB perfects: equivalents in 1999 Bible translation

- Each BB line with a perfect has been compared to its equivalent in the 1999 Ecumenical Bible edition (Old Testament translated by Antanas Rubšys)
- Where it is possible to find an equivalent for the VP, 50% of the sentences contain past or present tenses.
- A fair portion contains participles in non-perfect structures (semi-predicative or attributive).
- There are only 2 sentences out of 67 that contain a perfect both in Bretkūnas translation and the 1999 edition.





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👤 [redacted] Tie gyvūnai tame sode atrodo kaip dievų miško lageryje. 👍 1  
Like · Reply · 48m

👤 [redacted] Tik, todėl, kad gardus žemės gabalėlis naujiems daugiabuciams, verslo centrams ir t.t. 👍 2  
Like · Reply · 2h

👤 [redacted] Senai laikas imtis priemonių, nes šiuo metu ten gyvūnai yra kankinami. 👍 1

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# FB perfects

- Corpus size – 113 k words
- Frequency of perfects – 1/865 words  
(cfr. Arkadiev & Daugavet 2016, where the frequency of perfects identified in the Lithuanian National Corpus is 1/6670 words)
- Number of perfects in the sample – 131
- The usage of the auxiliary is inconsistent (only 24 % of the perfects have it)

# FB perfects: semantic values

- ATR – 15 %

*Talentinga aktorė, visada protingai kalba, žavinga, **nesusireikšminusi**.*

*'A talented actress, always speaks wisely, charming, **not self-important**.*

*Komentatorių paprašykite, kad nereikia kas 2 minutes priminti visiems, kokia prasta danga ir kad Portugalai prie jos **neprate**.*

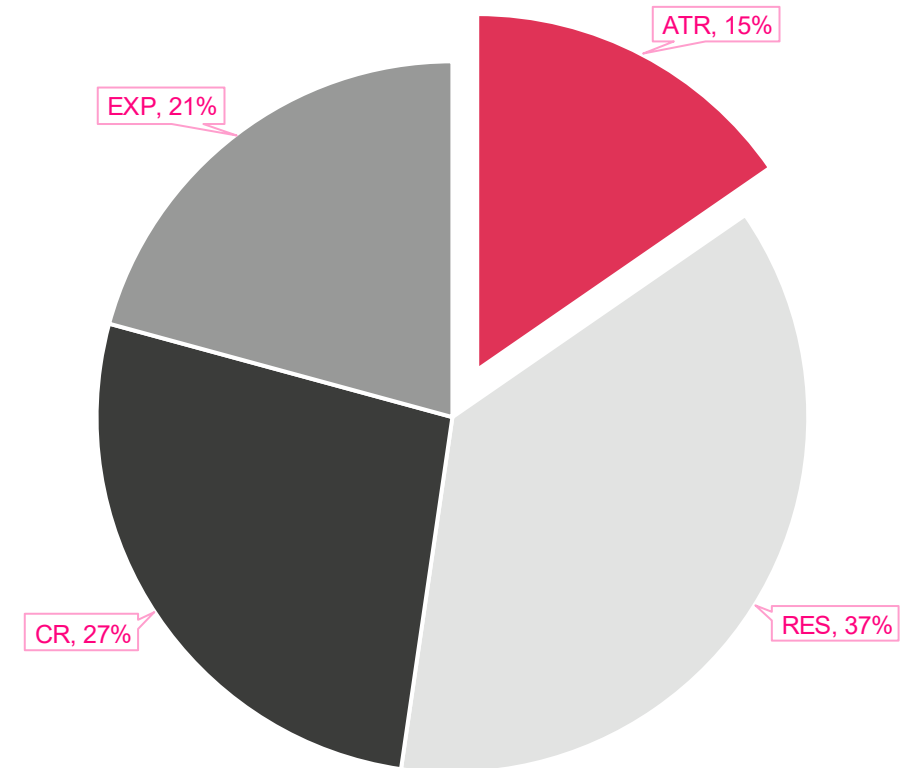
*'Please ask the commentators not to remind everyone every 2 minutes what a poor cover it is and how the Portuguese are **not used** to it.'*

*Orlande labai gražu, tarpais nuliija, jokios panikos, visi **atsipalaidavę**, parkai dirba. benzinas pigesnis nei NJ.*

*'It's very nice in Orlando, intermittent rains, no panic, everybody is **relaxed**, the parks are open, the fuel is cheaper than in NJ.'*

*Ar gerb. V. **išgėręs**, ar kažkaip kitaip negaluoja?*

*'Is Mr. V **tipsy** or does he have some other problem?'*



■ ATR ■ RES ■ CR ■ EXP

# FB perfects: semantic values

- RES – 37 %

Kaip politikas, Š., **ęsat žlugęs.**  
'As a politician, Š., you **are ruined.**'

11 val. vidudienį per anksti **atsikėlęs**? :D Iki kelių vakar



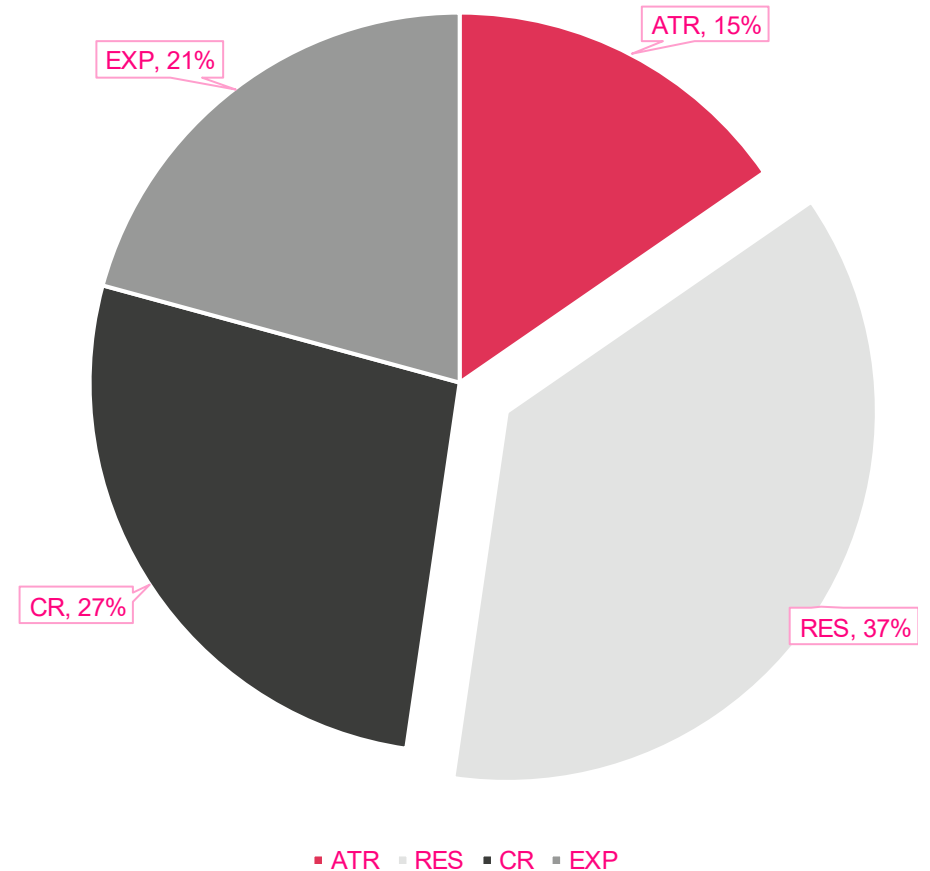
'At 11AM, at midday, you've **got up** too early? Until what time yesterday [emoticons]?'

Tas jausmas kai atvarai žaisti rungtynių svečiuose ir tos šalies gyventojai labiau **susidomėję** tavim nei savo komanda

'That feeling when you come to play a match abroad and the locals are more **interested** in you than in their own team

Auginam 4 vaikus ir nebeturim nei vieno mamadienio, nes tik 1 vaikas iki 12 m. O reikalų su vaikais tai nei kiek **nesumažėję**...

'We are raising 4 kids and we don't have a single mama-day anymore, because only one kid is up to 12. While the things to do for them **have not diminished**...'



# FB perfects: semantic values

- CR – 27 %

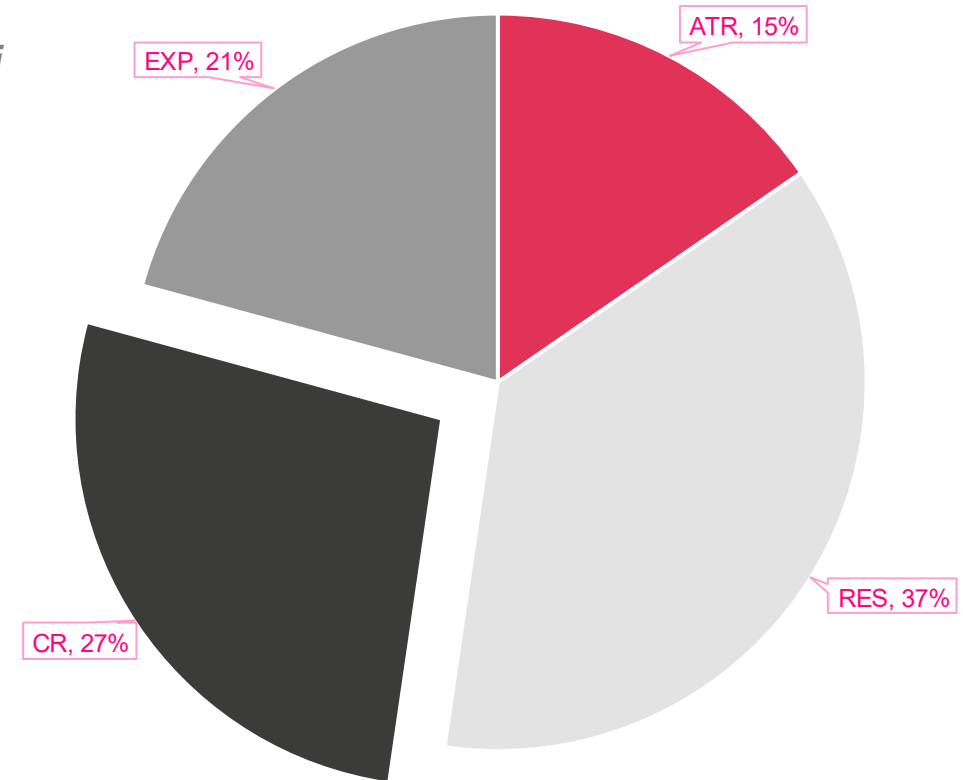
štai ponas G. džiaugiasi grįžtamuju ryšiu, kaip vertybe, o LRT.lt portalas visiškai **atjungęs** tokią galimybę ir džiaugiasi tuo bei didžiuojasi  
'here's Mr. G appreciating feedback as a value, while LRT.lt website **has** completely **switched off** this possibility and is glad and proud about it'

Senolių geras posakis yra tarbos lazdos ir tiurmos neissižadėk nes nežinia ka tau vaikeli gyvenimas **paruoses yra**  
'There's a good old saying - never renounce the bag, the stick and the prison, because you never know, my dear, what life **has prepared** for you'

Senatve, tai ir isore ir vidus ir dar nežinia kas. Jos nei paankstinsi, nei pavelinsi, kadangi organizmas **prarades** atsparuma jei dar priedo kokia kvaraba i r amen .  
'The age is both inside and outside and not only. You can't advance it, you can't delay it, because the body **has lost** resistance, and if you get some illness on top of it – amen.'

Didelė dalis dėstytojų atleisti ir jau **susiradę** kitus darbus (nes nėra studentų ir dėstytojai nesėdi ir nelaukia, kol pakils mokytojo prestižas).  
'Many university professors have been fired and **have** already **found** other jobs (because there are no students and the professors are not sitting around and waiting until the prestige of being a teacher will rise).'

Biski pakosmines sumas pasatui **paskaiciave**  
**Have calculated** kinda cosmic amounts for a Passat, haven't you?



■ ATR ■ RES ■ CR ■ EXP

# FB perfects: semantic values

- EXP – 21 %

Šaunuolis!, "Išsigraibė" visą auksą iš pasaulio baseinų, nepalikdamas šanso niekam kitam. Dar tokio medalių derliaus niekas **nėra parvežęs**...

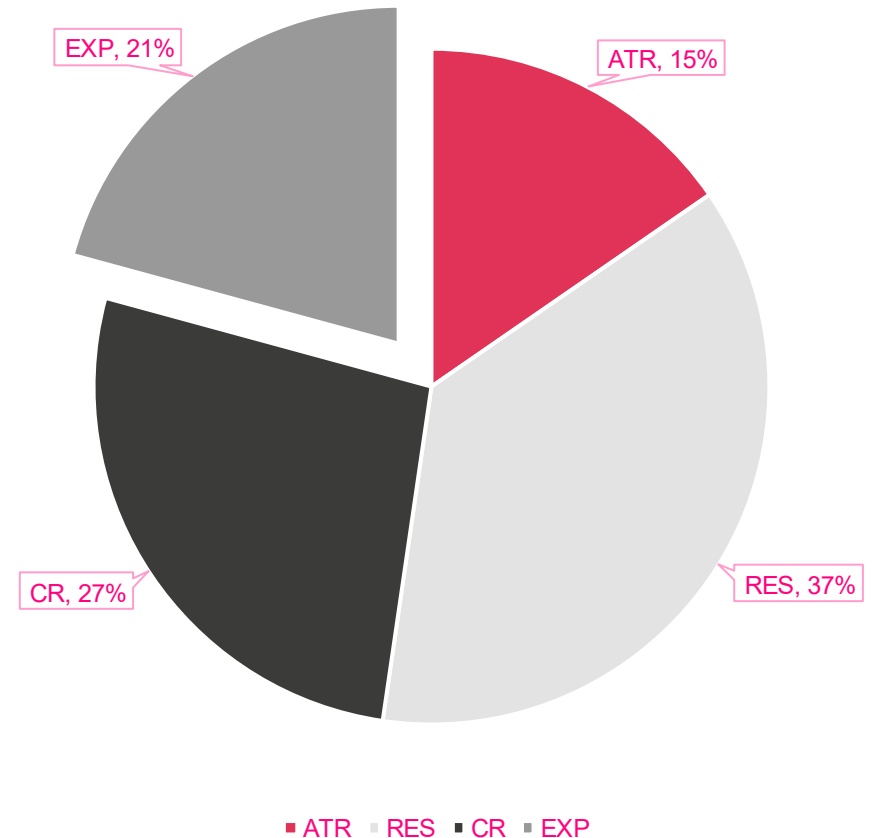
Well done! He has „groped out“ all the gold out of the worlds' swimming pools, not leaving a chance for anybody else. Nobody **has ever** brought back home such a harvest of medals...

O kas nors **yra girdėjęs** tokį daiktą - lojalumas.  
**Have** any of you ever **heard** such a thing – loyalty.

jis sako kad murininkas darbo neturi gal jis plytos **nera matęs**  
He says he's a brick-layers and he has no job, maybe he **has [never] seen** a brick

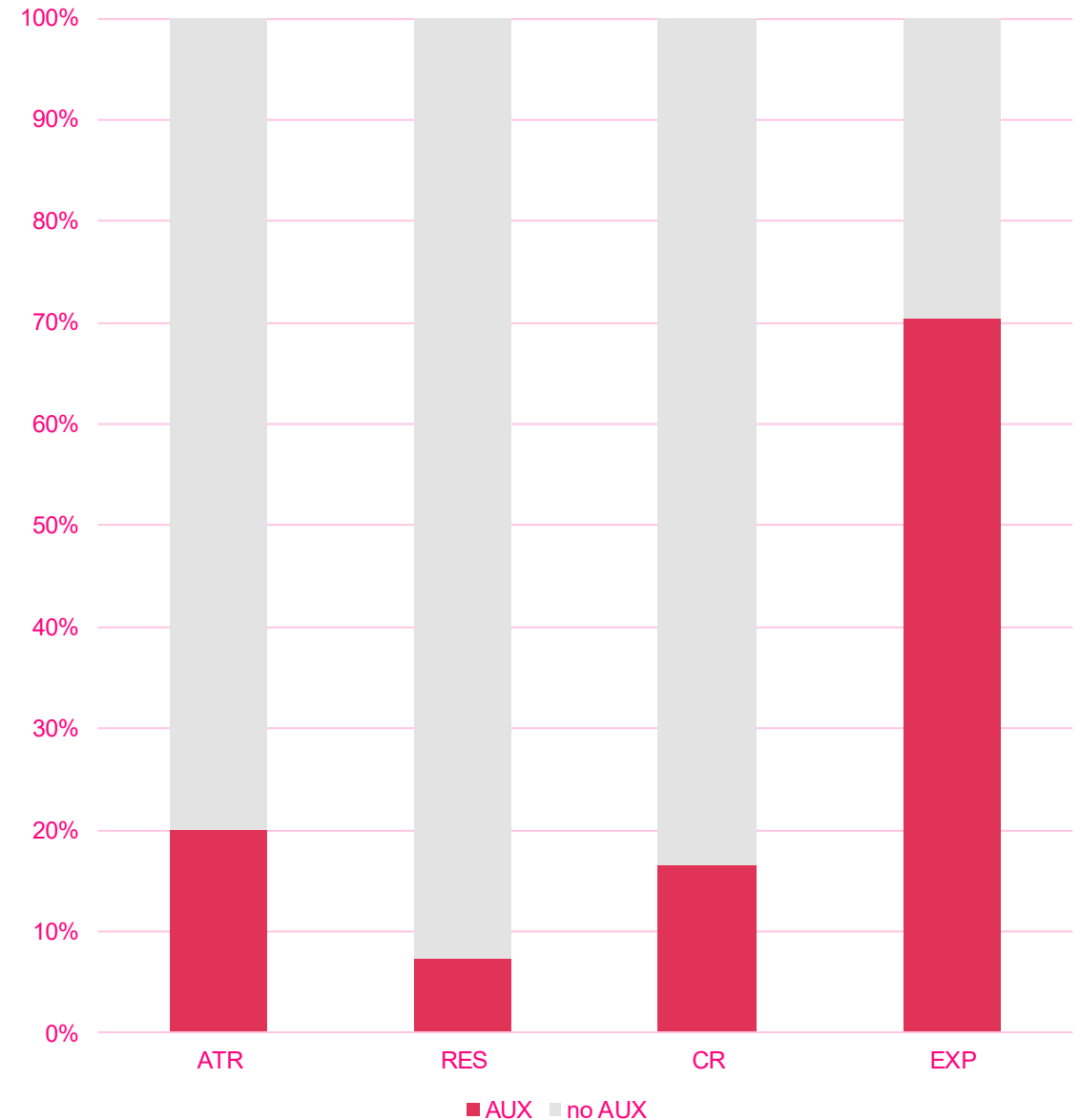
Kai kurie teisėjai iš džunglių, apie krepšinio taisykles žino tiek kiek **yra žaidę** su playstation'u  
Some referees are from the jungle, they know about basketball rules as much as they **have played** the Playstation

Ką čia svaigsta. Buvo geras mūrininkas... Sudegė dokumentai ir negalėjo eiti dirbt :D tokias nesąmones galima pasakoti nebent tik kas **uk nėra gyvenę** :D  
Bullshit. He was a good bricklayer... His documents burned and he couldn't go to work :D you can tell such nonsense only to people who **haven't lived** in the UK :D



# FB perfects: the optional auxiliary

- Less than 25 % of the perfect structures contain an auxiliary.
- However, it's usage is clearly differentiated between different semantic values of the perfect – 70 % the EXP perfects contain an auxiliary, comparing to low values in ambiguous ATR, RES and CR perfects.
- A fuller, more rigid formal structure of the EXPs can be explained by looking at this semantic value as a newer, less established one.



# Conclusions

- RES perfects have experienced a raise in their usage frequency – they are more common in both FB comments and data from LiLa.
- BB perfects show a significantly larger proportion of CR values, comparing to the contemporary language. Given that CR perfects are normally an extension of the RES subtype, this would represent a restriction – from broader semantic values of the perfects, to narrower. Cross-linguistically such a development is atypical.
- The EXP perfects are less frequent in BB than in the FB data. In the latter genre it is especially common with negation and can be distinguished by the frequent usage of the auxiliary, which is uncommon in RES and CR perfects. This may be a sign of the EXPs being the newest and the least established semantic value of the Lithuanian perfect, thus requiring a full structure.

Semantic values of Lithuanian perfects from different genres and periods (%)

