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Revisiting Involuntary State Constructions in Slovenian.

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I. Topic. Slovenian, Bulgarian, and Albanian share sentences like (1-3) called Involuntary State Constructions (ISCs) topic of a recent debate on the syntax/semantics interface (Kallulli 2006; Marušič and Žaucer (M&Ž) 2004, in press; Rivero 2004, 2005; Rivero and Sheppard (R&S) 2003).

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| (1) | <u>Janezu se spi.</u> | Slovenian |
| | John.Dat Refl sleep.Pres.3S “John is sleepy/ feels like sleeping.” | |
| (2) | <u>Na decata im se raboteše.</u> | Bulgarian |
| | P children.the 3P.Dat Refl work.Imp.3S “The children felt like working.” | |
| (3) | <u>Benit i ndërtohej.</u> | Albanian |
| | Ben.Dat 3S.Dat build.NAct.Imp.3S “Ben felt like building.” | |

Such ISCs have similar “feel-like” readings, but no clear intensional markers. For R&S, they consist of one syntactic clause with a dative adjunct whose head is a modal operator in semantics. For M&Ž, (1) consists of two clauses with an inherently reflexive null psychological verb with a dative subject in the matrix, and the lexical verb in a defective complement clause. For Kallulli, the verb ndërtohej coupled to (obligatory) nonactive morphology in (3) provides intensionality. For Rivero (2005), the Imperfect tense raboteše in (2) contains an intensional operator similar to the English progressive.

II. Proposal. In this paper, we revisit Slovenian ISCs, arguing for two hypotheses. First, ISCs consist of one clause in syntax, keeping the insight of R&S. Second, their intensional character is due to “aspectuality”. More precisely, Slovenian ISCs contain an imperfective operator in inflection, or an atelic operator in the verb, and perfective and telic items as interveners can block the intensional effect of such operators. This proposal combines ideas in (Rivero 2005) and (Kallulli 2006), and aims to capture insightfully the considerable parametric variation in the inflectional morphosyntax of ISCs in languages whose temporal / aspectual systems differ considerably.

III. Justification. The idea that ISCs are monoclausal with aspectuality as source of intensionality offers advantages. One is to preclude costly syntactic derivations, and problematic assumptions vis-à-vis learnability. Bulgarian and Albanian have (some) overt inherently reflexive verbs with dative subjects, but lack processes such as restructuring and clitic climbing needed to derive (2-3) from two clauses, which makes the biclausal hypothesis empirically unmotivated and unreasonably costly (Rivero 2005). By contrast, Slovenian has restructuring and clitic climbing (Golden 2003, Golden and Sheppard 2000), but lacks overt verbs with the required properties, except for luštati “desire”, the German borrowing mentioned by M&Ž. The assumption that Slovenian (1) contains a null verb, then, is costly for learnability. A second advantage of our proposal is that it contributes in a novel way to the study of aspect as a modal category, a topic that has attracted attention in English and Romance but not Slavic. To illustrate with a case in point, M&Ž see the combination of the two non-agreeing temporal adverbs yesterday and tomorrow in the ISC in (4) as a syntactic sign of two clauses. However, these adverbs can combine in ordinary past sentences that are not ISCs but display the appropriate aspectual characteristics, such as (5) with the imperfective atelic verb leteli “fly”. Slovenian, then,

is a language with aspectual categories whose modal uses license conflicting adverbs, as in (4-5), and what must be determined are the conditions that allow this situation.

- (4) Včeraj se mi ni šlo jutri domov. Slovenian
 “Yesterday, I didn't feel like going home tomorrow.”
- (5) Se včeraj smo jutri leteli v London, danes pa zvemo, da so vsi leti v London odpovedani. Slovenian
 “Still yesterday we were flying to London tomorrow, but today we find out that all flights to London are cancelled.”

Interesting intervention effects on intensionality exist in Slovenian, as shown by comparing verbs in imperfective form, (6a), those with perfective prefixes, (6b), and those with secondary imperfectivization and perfective prefixes, (6c).

- (6) a. Janezu se piše pisma. (imperfective) Slovenian
 Janez.Dat Refl write.3S letters
- b. Janezu se pre-piše pisma. (perfective)
 Janez.Dat Refl pre-write.3S letters
- c. Janezu se pre-pisuje pisma. (secondary imperfect.)
 Janez.Dat Refl pre-write.3S letters

Informants assign “feel-like” readings to (6a) and (6c), not (6b). First, affirmative sentences without discourse markers or negation and imperfective Vs such as (6a) have two readings: “John feels like writing (the) letters”, and “(The) letters are written to John”. Second, informants agree that there is no “feel-like” reading with verbs with perfective prefixes as in (6b), whether the accusative object is taken to be definite or indefinite (contra M&Ž). Third, with verbs with secondary imperfectivization such as pre-piso-va-ti corresponding to (6c), a “feel-like” reading is again possible. We propose to account for such semantic contrasts through Intervention, assuming that in Slovenian, perfective categories such as pre- block intensionality, and thus obliterate the “feel-like” reading. We formalize this idea by treating such a prefix as an intervener that interrupts the chain between the dative logical subject and V in VP as element with an atelic operator for intensionality. Secondary imperfectivization in (6c) allows a “feel-like” reading because the dative logical subject can establish a chain-relation with the inflectional element corresponding to -va- in infinitive pre-piso-va-ti. Va can also function as intensional operator, and is in a structural position higher than pre-, so this prefix cannot block its intensional effect.

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