

DIALOGUE-2014

Sentential arguments and event
structure

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- *Что сентенциальные подлежащие существуют, всем известно.*

Summary

- Sentential subjects are typical for sentences without an Agent NP/DP. Sentential subjects express semantic roles as Causer or Stimulus with predicates subcategorizing for an animate Patient or Experiencer marked with accusative or oblique case. Such predicates denote uncontrolled events, which do not imply any human Agent or volitional Causer.
- The same languages, notably, Modern Icelandic, Ukrainian and Russian, also make use of zero subjects with similar role-and-reference properties. Both sentential subjects and zero subjects can have the value of External Force.
- Ukrainian and Russian sentential subjects with a value of External Force project event structure without a human Causer while some types of zero subjects in these languages project event structure with a human Causer. This contrast is partly due to different parameter settings and partly due to lexical semantics, since sentential and zero subjects are licensed by different groups of predicates.

Outline

- In section 1, I render the notion of sentential subjects.
- In section 2 I discuss subjecthood tests for several Germanic and Slavic languages.
- In section 3, I analyze event structure projected by predicates licensing sentential subjects and by predicates licensing zero subjects.
- In section 4, I offer syntactic diagnostics for Russian predicates with a propositional argument.

Sentential, Expletive and Oblique

- (i) Dative subject >> sentential subject >> semi-expletive *eto*.
- If (i) holds for Russian DPS, dative DPS subjects with the role of Experiencer have a priority over sentential arguments: the latter are chosen as subjects only if dative subjects are absent. If neither dative nor sentential subjects are present, *eto* is selected as subject.
- (ii) Sentential subject >> dative subject >> *eto*.

Dative-Predicative-Structures (DPS)

- (6) Rus. a. *Eto* udiviteljno_{Pred}, [_{CP} čto pogoda ne isportilas’].
 - b. ***Mne** *eto* udiviteljno_{Pred}, [_{CP} čto pogoda ne isportilas’].
 - c. **Mne** *eto* udiviteljno_{Pred}.
 - d. [_{CP} čto pogoda ne isportilas’], udivitel’no_{Pred}.
 - e. Udivitel’no_{Pred}, [_{CP} čto pogoda ne isportilas’].
 - f. **Mne** udivitel’no_{Pred}, [_{CP} čto pogoda ne isportilas’].

Causatives from non-psych verbs

- Standard causatives from non-psych verbs like *vynudit'* 'to force sm. to do smth', *zastavit'* 'make smb do smth', *sklonit' k* 'to dispose smb to smth' license an {+animate} zero subject controlling the 3Pl form which seems a more or less general feature of all Russian verbs, cf. (12a) and example (12b), with a lexicalized past participle *vynužden* 'forced'.
- They also license overt sentential subjects as non-human Causers, as illustrated by (12c). In this case the CP filling in the subject position must be headed by a correlative pronoun $to_{3Sg.N}$ controlling the agreement form of the verb. Note that merging of bare that-clauses into subject position with causatives from the group *vynudit'* is impossible, cf. (12d).

DPS and that-clauses

- (13) Rus. a. Mne bylo **stydno**, [čto tak vyšlo].
- b. *Mne bylo **stydno**, [*to* [čto tak vyšlo]].
- c. *Mne byl-o **stydno**, /***styden** *tot fakt* [čto tak vyšlo]]

- (14) Rus. a. Mne bylo **protivno**, [čto tak vyšlo].
- b. ??Mne bylo **protivno**, [*to* [čto tak vyšlo]].
- c. Mne byl **protiven** [*tot fakt* [čto tak vyšlo]].

- (15) Rus. a. Mne bylo **bezrazlično**, [čto vse tak vyšlo].
- b. Mne bylo **bezrazlično**, [*to* [čto tak vyšlo]].
- c. Mne byl **bezrazličěn** [NP *tot fakt* [čto tak vyšlo]].

Predicate classes and the *to*, *čto*-clauses

- Factivity and capacity of taking *to*, *čto*-clauses as subject / direct object are related but independent values.
- *To*, *čto*-clauses are licensed by predicates projecting an event structure with a dedicated sub-event. This feature naturally combines with factivity. If a proposition has the status of fact, parts of it can easily be singled-out and highlighted: if p and q are sub-events of a fact P , then contrastive utterances that X knows p <but not necessarily knows q > and the corresponding prosodic cues for marking logical contrast are appropriate.
- If, on the contrary, proposition p has the status of an intentional object, situation, parts of it usually cannot be singled out, and there is no dedicated sub-event. Therefore non-factive predicates normally do not license *to*, *čto*-clauses.
- The ban on bare *čto P*-clauses with causatives from non-psych verbs (class 2) indicates that though causatives of this type license sentential subjects, the propositional argument has the status of fact and cannot be ‘intensionalized’. This does not hold for causatives from psych-verbs (class 3): they subcategorize for {+ animate} Causees and neither ban nor require bare *čto P*-clauses.
- DPS predicatives split into a strictly non-factive class (5) that requires bare *čto P*-clauses and rules out *to*, *čto*-clauses, just as non-factive verbs (classes 6, 7) do, and ambivalent class (4), the members of which—cf. *izvestno/važno*, *bezrazlično* verbs behave exactly as causatives from non-psych verbs and license both bare *čto P*-clauses and *to*, *čto*-clauses:
- *mne važno, čto P* ~ *mne važno, čto P* ‘it is important to me that P ’

Bare that-clauses

- (12) Rus. a. \emptyset^{3Pl} {+ animate} **Ego** vynudi-l-i [_{IP} uvolit'sa s raboty].
- 'He was forced to quit his position <due to activities of some human Agents>'
- b. On byl vynužden [_{IP} uvolit'sal s raboty].
- 'he was forced to quit his position <due to some external circumstances or personal problems>'
- c. [*To*, [_{CP} čto boss srezal emu zarplatu]] vynudi-l-o **ego**
- [_{IP} uvolit'sal s raboty].
- '[_{CP} that the boss cut down his salary] forced **him** to quit his position'.
- d. * [_{CP} čto boss srezal emu zarplatu]] vynudi-l-o
- **ego** [_{IP} uvolit'salnf s raboty].

Conclusions, I

- Sentential complements are internal arguments that can be raised to surface subject position, where they alternate with oblique or expletive subjects, if a language has these kinds of categories.
- Russian causatives from non-psych verbs project an event structure where the sentential subject can be analyzed as Causer or even as Agent.
- The uses of correlative *to*, *čto* *P*-clauses in the positions of surface subject and direct object serve as diagnostics for factive predicates in Russian.
- Licensing of *to*, *čto* *P*-clauses hangs on a feature closely related to factivity – capacity of projecting an event structure with a dedicated sub-event. Inability of licensing *to*, *čto* *P*-clauses proves that a propositional predicate is non-factive.

Conclusions, II

- Russian has expletive elements *eto* and *to* which have different syntax. Expletive *eto* belongs to the matrix clause and does not form a constituent with the CP it antecedes. It alternates with oblique dative subjects in the surface subject position, can be separated from the correlative complement clause, has a propensity for fronting in its clause and is not sensitive to the semantics of DPS predicatives. Expletive *to* forms a constituent with its CP, cannot be separated from it and does not combine with non-factive DPS predicatives.
- These features of Russian expletive elements resemble the syntax of Germanic expletives like Eng. *it*, Da, Sw., Norw. *det*, Ger. *es*, but there are no one-to-one correspondences between the languages.

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