

### The involuntary state/FEEL-LIKE construction: What aspect cannot do

This paper deals with the hyperintensional South Slavic Involuntary State Construction (ISC), (1a), which is interesting in having a dispositional meaning but no overt element encoding it, and which recently received two substantially different analyses. Marušič & Žaucer (2006) claim that the ISC is essentially parallel to its paraphrase with two overt verbs, (1b), but that the matrix verb of the ISC is null. On the other hand, Rivero (2009) argues that the ‘modal’ meaning of the ISC arises from a viewpoint-aspect imperfective operator, IMP<sup>OP</sup>.

- (1) a. *Juš se pleše sambo.*      b. *Juš se lušta plesat sambo.* (Slovenian)  
       Juš<sub>dat</sub> refl dances samba<sub>acc</sub>      Juš<sub>dat</sub> refl feels-like dance<sub>inf</sub> samba<sub>acc</sub>  
       ‘Juš feels like dancing samba.’      ‘Juš feels like dancing samba.’

If the aspect-based approach to the ISC is correct, it has consequences not only for the analysis of the ISC but also for the theory of null verbs, which loses the only specimen that has been proposed as instantiating its logical possibility that a null verb is a *matrix* verb (besides the option with an *embedded* null verb, as in the proposals of McCawley 1979, Ross 1979 etc.), and for the sententialist view of hyperintensionality (e.g. Larson 2002), since the hyperintensionality of the ISC would arise outside the context of a clausal complement, contrary to the sententialist stance. This paper argues, however, that the aspect-based analysis of the ISC is problematic in several respects, and reinstates the null-verb analysis.

The crux of Rivero’s (2009) analysis is the claim that the ISC is comparable in an important sense to the English ‘futures’ (Copley 2008), (2), or Spanish ‘imperfectos’.

- (2) *For two weeks, the Red Sox were playing the Yankees today.* (Rivero 2009: 153)

These typically involve something like a ‘plan’ of an event that is supposed to happen in the future, and Rivero (2009) claims that this ‘modal’ facet of futures derives from a viewpoint-aspect imperfective operator, IMP<sup>OP</sup> (introduced in (2) as the progressive form). The ‘modal’/‘plan’ interpretation of futures and the ‘modal’/dispositional interpretation of the ISC are both claimed to arise from IMP<sup>OP</sup> (though for the ‘modality’ to be interpreted as a ‘disposition’ in the ISC, a TP-embedding dative argument is also required). Similarly, the IMP<sup>OP</sup> is claimed to be the origin of the ISC’s hyperintensionality. The analysis is problematic in its partial equating of the ISC with futures as well as for reasons independent of this parallel.

Firstly, Rivero (2009) proposes that the prefix *pri-*, when it occurs in the Bulgarian ISC to mark the inception of the ‘modality’/disposition, instantiates IMP<sup>OP</sup>, which is the source of ‘modality’, just like the suffix *-va-* (op.cit.: 178). Looking at Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian, where the ISC can also host the inceptive *pri-*, (3) (cf. M&Ž 2006), three problems arise. One, as shown in (3), leaving out the prefix removes the inception meaning, but the structure remains ‘modal’/dispositional, so it cannot be that the prefix encodes the ‘modality’. Two, if the ISC with an inceptive *pri-* is claimed to be imperfective (via the *pri-*-introduced IMP<sup>OP</sup>), on a par with *-va-*-marked forms, this makes the *pri-*-forms the only imperfectives which are not at all compatible with the *for-x-time* adverbials, (4). Three, with some imagination, one can produce (5), in which the verbal form contains the inceptive prefix *and* the imperfective suffix *-va-*, which should encode imperfectivity and ‘modality’ in the same projection. If this were correct, then *pri-* and *-va-* should be in complementary distribution. (And if one were, for instance, claimed to be the head and the other its specifier, thus potentially allowing cooccurrence, they should have undefinable relative scope, which is not the case (*-va-* scopes over *pri-*)).

- (3) a. *Pri-piškilo mi se.*      b. *Piškilo mi se.*      (S/C/B)  
       at- piss I<sub>DAT</sub> refl      piss I<sub>DAT</sub> refl  
       ‘I started to need to pee.’      ‘I needed to pee.’

- (4) a. *Piško sam 5 minuta.*                      b. *Piško mi se 2 sata.* (S/C/B)  
 pee aux 5 minutes                              pee I<sub>DAT</sub> refl 2 hours  
 ‘I was peeing for 5 minutes.’                ‘For 2 hours, I felt like peeing.’
- c. \**Pri-piško mi se 2 sata.* (S/C/B)  
 at-pee I<sub>DAT</sub> refl 2 hours
- (5) *Baš mi se pri-piški-va-lo, kad je zazvonio telefon.* (S/C/B)  
 ‘I was just starting to need to pee when the phone rang.’

Secondly, the ‘modality’ of the ISC is claimed to be introduced in the TP-dominated viewpoint-aspect operator (interpreted as disposition in the ISC, but not in futurates, due to the dative/superhigh applicative). Root modals are typically claimed to have a fixed position in the hierarchy of clausal projections, as are viewpoint-aspect projections (e.g. Cinque 1999, Butler 2003). It is not clear whether the viewpoint-aspect IMP<sup>OP</sup> would sit above or below the projection hosting a root modal such as ‘may’; however, it should be either above or below, allowing a single relative scope between the root modality of ‘may’ and the disposition/‘modality’ of the ISC. This prediction, however, is incorrect, since the root modal can scope both under and over the disposition (Marušič & Žaucer 2006: 1121), (6).

- (6) *Juš se sme igrat fuzbal.* (Slovenian)  
 Juš<sub>DAT</sub> refl may play soccer  
 ‘Juš feels like being allowed to play soccer’ or ‘Juš is allowed to feel like playing soccer.’

Thirdly, placing the basic ingredient of the ‘modality’ of futurates and the ISC in the same projection makes another clear prediction: we cannot have a futurate ISC, the two should be in complementary distribution. Even though futurates of most statives are not nearly as natural as futurates of predicates such as *play the Yankees*, they are often at least marginally possible, and the same goes for the ISC, as in the futurate ISC in (7) (cf. Marušič & Žaucer 2006: 1101). The ‘modality’ of futurates and the ISCs, then, cannot both arise in the same aspect projection.

- (7) *Včeraj se mi danes še ni šlo v hribe.* (Slovenian)  
 yesterday refl I.dat today still not go to mountains  
 ‘Yesterday, I wasn’t gonna be in the mood today for going to the mountains.’

Fourthly, Rivero (2009: 164-5, fn. 5) claims that futurates and the ISC behave alike with respect to intensionality. This is incorrect. As seen in (8), substitution of coreferring terms need not preserve truth in the ISC (*Habs* being the nickname for the *Canadiens*), whereas the same necessarily preserves truth in the futurate counterpart of the ISC in (8), as seen in (9).

- (8) *Včer se je Sensom igral jutro s Canadiensi.*                       $\neq \Rightarrow$                       *Včer se je Sensom igral jutro s Habsi.*  
 ‘Yesterday the Sens felt like playing the Canadiens tomorrow.’ ‘Yesterday the Sens felt like playing the Habs tomorrow.’
- (9) *Yesterday, the Sens were playing the Canadiens tomorrow (but today the schedule has changed).*  $\Rightarrow$  *Yesterday, the Sens were playing the Habs tomorrow (but today the schedule has changed).*

In addition to the above empirical arguments against Rivero’s aspect-based analysis of ISCs, we will also discuss some theoretical problems that the latter raises. For how the null verb approach accounts for the presented data, we refer to Marušič and Žaucer (2006). We will also discuss how the null verb analysis can be extended to account for some further data Rivero (2009) brings into the ISC discussion.

Selected references:

Rivero, María-Luisa. 2009. Intensionality, high applicatives, and aspect: involuntary state constructions in Bulgarian and Slovenian. *NLLT* 27: 151-196. / Marušič, Franc & Rok Žaucer. 2006. On the intensional FEEL-LIKE construction in Slovenian: A case of a phonologically null verb. *NLLT* 24: 1093-1159.