Impersonal Reflexive Constructions (South Slavic Languages vs. Russian)

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0. The talk focuses on South Slavic impersonal verbal constructions and compares them with those in Russian. In South Slavic impersonal verbal constructions most frequently comprise verbal forms in the third-person neuter that express a general agent (Sn *Smo primer tranzicije, v kateri **se krade**, kjer se le dá.* 'We are an example of a country in transition where one steals whenever possible', on one hand, or an experiencer of the state (BCMS *Vrti mi se* 'I'm dizzy'*)*, on the other.

1. A very productive type of these constructions in Slovenian and other South Slavic languages is the type with a general agent (e.g., Bg *Едно време на излет **се е ходило** с колело* 'In olden days people used to go for cycling trips'). As the precondition for this type is an unnamed human agent, it can be concluded that the selection of verbal meanings is limited to human activity: verbs of conscious activity strongly predominate over verbs of state.

A special type of construction with a non-overt agent and an accusative object is used in Slovenian and Croatian (e.g., Sn ***Kavo** se dobi za dva evra* 'One gets coffee for 2 euro'). On the formal level, this construction differs from the reflexive passive proper (Sn ***Kava** se dobi za deset evrov*) because the semantic patient is encoded in a non-nominative case. This type of reflexive construction with accusative object will be compared with the canonical passive.

2. The second type of construction studied (i.e., reflexive impersonal verbal constructions with a dative experiencer) is characterized by the fact that the dative experiencer reduces the degree of agency of the entire sentence (which is lower than in constructions with a general agent).). In the Slavic languages analyzed — Slovenian, BCMS, Bulgarian, and Russian — these constructions have various semantic and syntactic characteristics.
Russian reflexive impersonal verbal constructions with the dative (Ru ***Мне** всегда как-то лучше **работается** за городом* 'I always work better in the country') expressing the evaluation of the degree of success of a specific situation, appears also in Ukrainian, Polish and Czech, but are not typic of the South Slavic languages.

In South Slavic languages, except for Slovenian, the expression of inclination using the dative and a reflexive verbs is productive; e.g., BCMS ***Putuje mi se***, Bg ***Пътува ми се*** 'I feel like travelling'. Omitting the dative agent, however, changes the meaning of the construction: for example, the optative construction BCMS *Svako l(j)eto **mi se putuje** na more* 'I like to travel to the seaside every year' instead turns into a construction with a general agent, BCMS *Svako l(j)eto **se putuje** na more* 'People travel to the seaside every year'. The Slovenian equivalents confirm that, compared to other South Slavic languages, the dative optative construction is in Slovenian marginal and significantly less common.