

Minimalist Approaches to Slavic Reflexives

In GB, reflexives received their referential interpretations via c-command relationships with structurally higher expressions. However, a number of minimalist approaches have called this into question. Two theories which do not specifically account for reflexive data, although their proponents suggest that they should, are the Movement Theory of Control (MTC; Hornstein 2001, *inter alia*) and Kratzer's (2009) theory of minimal pronouns created through feature sharing (a slightly different approach than the Agree-based proposals of, e.g., Chomsky 2008, Gallego 2010, Hicks 2009, Reuland 2005, 2011, among others).

This talk will examine the application of the above two theories to Russian, Polish, and Bulgarian data and consider where each can handle the data and where it cannot. Difficult issues within Slavic include long-distance antecedents, as in (1), homonyms with either reflexive or reciprocal interpretation (i.e., Polish *siebie*), as in (2), and the (non-standard) Bulgarian *nego si*, which seems to behave both as a reflexive and as a pronoun, as in (3).

- (1) General₁ ne razrešaet sekretar'she₂ pozvolit' dvorniku₃ nazyvat' sebja_{1/2/3} Valej.
'The general does not permit the secretary to allow the yard-keeper to call him/her/himself Valja.'
(Rappaport 1986: 105)
- (2) a. Chłopcy₁ zapytali dziewczęta₂ o siebie_{1/*2}. (Franks 2013: 35)
'The boys asked the girls about themselves.'
b. Chłopcy₁ zapytali dziewczęta₂ o siebie_{1/2}.
'The boys asked the girls about each other.'
- (3) a. [Ivanovijat₁ bašta₂] kritikova nego si_{1/2}. (Schürks 2008: 66)
'Ivan's father criticizes him-SI.'
b. Ivan₁ kazva, če Petür₂ mrazi nego si_{1/2}. (Schürks 2008: 75)
'Ivan says that the doctor hates him-SI.'

Each theory has difficulties in accounting for the full range of Slavic data. For example, while the MTC, which states that the reflexive is actually a lower copy of the antecedent which is changed into a reflexive to save the derivation at Spell-Out, can easily account for the binding between *sebja* and *dvorniku* in (1), greater distances of hypothetical movement become difficult with respect to the principles of shortest move and move-over-merge, especially given the optionality of coreference. Some work has been done on reflexives using the MTC (Boeckx, Hornstein, and Nunes 2008, Drummond 2011, among others), but little or none within Slavic.

While Kratzer's theory of empty pronouns, which states that featureless "pronouns" merge into the derivation and then gain their features through a probe operation, could handle for the optionality in (2) by marking the empty pronouns as [+Refl] or [+Recip], it has difficulty accounting for the optionality in (3) due to the existence of less-marked structures with the standard reflexive *sebe si* or the pronoun *nego*, e.g., *Ivanovijat₁ bašta₂ kritikova sebe si_{1/2}* and *Ivanovijat₁ bašta₂ kritikova nego_{1/*2}*. With only the transmission of features at play, only one possible Spell-Out operation should exist to change those features into something pronounceable at PF, eliminating the possibility of alternation.

References

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