An Upward Agree Analysis of Obviative Subjunctives in North Slavic
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Goal. This paper proposes a syntactico-semantic analysis of obviative subjunctives with volitional verbs. The proposed analysis employs the upward Agree operation (in addition to downward Agree) and a quasi imperative operator which binds elements responsible for the embedded event. The proposal can also analyze weakened obviation effects.

Background. The subjunctive/irrealis marker by can co-occur only with the past tense form of the verb (and infinitives, e.g. in Russian and Polish); see e.g. (1). The embedded clause, however, allows past, present and future interpretations, as shown in (2).

(1) Oleg čočeť, čtoby Artur čital / * čitať / * budet čitať gazetu. (R)
Oleg wants that.by Artur read.pst reads will read.inf newspaper
‘Oleg wants Artur to read a newspaper.’

(2) Jan chtěl, aby Jirka dneska / včera / zítra koupil noviny. (CZ)
Jan wanted and.by Jirka today yesterday tomorrow bought newspaper
‘Jan wanted Jirka to buy a newspaper today/yesterday/tomorrow.’

Volitional verbs like chotet’ select a complement without an absolute semantic tense, see (1)-(2) for subjunctives and (3) for infinitives; the event in the embedded clause must follow the matrix (volitional) event, as is obvious from the translations.

(3) Kasia chciała kupić pralkę. (P)
Kasia wanted buy.inf washing.machine
‘Kasia wanted to buy a washing machine.’

In contrast to infinitives (3) and embedded indicatives, in subjunctives obviation arises (4).

(4) Oleg₂ čočeť, čtoby on₁,₂ čital gazetu. (R)
Oleg wants that.by he₁ read newspaper
‘Oleg wants that he reads a newspaper.’

Avrutin & Babyonyshev (1997) discuss exceptions from obviation (e.g. coreference between the matrix object and the embedded subject, coreference between the matrix subject and a dative subject within the subjunctive, coreference between the matrix subject and a possessive element contained within the subjunctive subject) and show that they are problematic for the binding domain extension approaches (e.g. Progovac 1993). Szucsich (2009) in turn discusses weak points of Avrutin & Babyonyshev’s (1997) event operator approach and proposes a feature sharing analysis based on Tense-features of Pesetsky & Torrego (2006, 2007); see also Antonenko (2010). Pure syntactic approaches like Szucsich (2009) and Antonenko (2010), however, have problems with data with weakened obviation effects like (5)-(7) because there the nominative embedded subject that can be coreferential with the nominative matrix subject.

(5) Jirkaₐ chce, aby pro₁,₂ se uzdravil. (CZ)
Jirka.NOM wants and.by pro₁,NOM self became.healthy
‘Jirka wants to become healthy.’

(6) Jan₁ chce, aby pro₁,₂ byl pochválen všemi. (CZ)
Jan.NOM wants and.by pro₁,NOM was praised by.all
‘Jan wants to be praised by all.’

(7) Pavel₁ chce, aby pro₁,₂ tu árii mohl zazpívat už dneska večer. (CZ)
Pavel.NOM wants and.by the aria could sing already today evening
‘Pavel wants to be allowed to sing the aria already today evening.’

Analysis. Times. Since the subjunctive clauses lack not only the speech time but also the capability of expressing the relation between the speech time and the reference time with the verb form, and the embedded event must follow (is dependent on the time of) the volitional
act of the matrix clause, the T(ense)-feature on the embedded T (by) is unvalued. Given that a probe is an element with an unvalued feature and the goal is an element with the matching valued feature, the embedded T must be the probe. And since the goal c-commands the probe, we deal with upward Agree here (cf. Zeijlstra 2012). Assuming the phase model with the weak PIC, for T by not to be trapped in the CP phase and to get a value from the matrix T, it must raise. This is corroborated by composed conjunctions like čtoby (R), žeby (P) and aby (CZ) (see Tomaszewicz 2009 for movement of by in Polish). If by does not move and is spelled out in the subjunctive CP phase, the sentence is bad, as expected (8).

(8)  * Oleg  čočet, čto  Artur  čital gazetu.    (R)
    Oleg wants that Artur by read newspaper

Movement and the underspecification of the time meaning is also present with by in conditionals, as shown by the compatibility of the predicate with different temporals in (9).

(9) Kdyby  Jan včera / dneska / zítra napsal email, …    (CZ)
    when.by  Jan yesterday today tomorrow wrote email

The movement of by to C makes the unvalued T-feature visible for the selection by the matrix V, which selects a complement with an unvalued T-feature; cf. (1)-(3). The ordering relation between the matrix event and the subjunctive event is encoded in the matrix T, which existentially binds the matrix and subjunctive reference time, introduces the precedence relation between them and also between the matrix speech time and reference time; see for chotel: \( \lambda P \exists t_{\text{matr}}[P(t) (t_{\text{matr}}) & t > t_{\text{matr}} & t_{\text{matr}} < t^*] \) (the unvalued subjunctive T only \( \lambda \)-binds the reference time). The ordering cannot be encoded in the subjunctive or infinitive clause since they also occur in contexts without such a precedence relation (not shown here).

**Obviation.** Given the discussed data, the following generalization emerges. Coreference between the matrix subject and an element within the embedded clause is not possible if the embedded clause is subjunctive and the element is responsible over the event denoted by the embedded clause (cf. Farkas 1992). Intuitively, if the embedded element is not coreferential with the matrix subject, i.e. the matrix subject cannot control the (realization of the) embedded event, using irreality (the subjunctive form) makes sense. In contrast, with coreference between the matrix and embedded subject, i.e. when the matrix subject has a control over the embedded event, using the irrealis (the subjunctive form) makes sense. In contrast, with coreference between the matrix subject and an element within the embedded clause is not possible if the embedded clause is subjunctive and the element is responsible over the event denoted by the embedded clause (cf. Farkas 1992). Intuitively, if the embedded element is not coreferential with the matrix subject, i.e. the matrix subject cannot control the (realization of the) embedded event, using irreality (the subjunctive form) makes sense. In contrast, with coreference between the matrix and embedded subject, i.e. when the matrix subject has a control over the embedded event, using the irrealis (the subjunctive form) makes sense. I assume that responsibility is a property of agents and treat \( \theta \)-roles as features. Following Kempchinsky (1986, 2009), I posit a quasi imperative operator in the subjunctive C, with the meaning ‘anyone other than the matrix subject’. The presence of this operator explains why cases like (10) have the imperative interpretation, in contrast to indicative complements.

(10) Jacek  powiedział, žeby  pro₁,₂ kupił rower       (P)
    Jacek said that.by bought bicycle

‘Jacek ordered him to buy a bicycle.’

The operator triggers movement of by to C (resulting in žeby, čtoby, aby etc.) and semantically binds a subject oriented antilogophoric element. To derive the disjoint reference data above, I assume that this binding relation is a reflex of Agree between the unvalued agent feature of the embedded C and the valued agent feature of the pronoun responsible for the embedded event. The exceptions from obviation with an embedded dative subject or a possessive within the subjunctive subject are easily explained because these elements are not agents. Hence, there is no agent Agree and no appropriate binding. The same reasoning applies to (5) and (6), where the pros are not responsible for the embedded events. Also, there is no problem with the matrix object coreferential with the subjunctive subject since the quasi imperative operator is only concerned with the matrix subject. Given that in (7) obviation is missing because of decreased agentivity, I assume that modals can also assign \( \theta \)-role features, concretely [-agent]. Since pro then has contradictory features (+agent from zazpívat and -agent from mohl), Agree with the embedded C is not possible and the pro cannot be bound.