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Secondary predication in control sentences

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Depictives are standardly assumed to be part of the verbal phrase, as right-adjunction to V' node or something similar (Larson 1989, Jackendoff 1990, Rapoport 1993, Baylin 2001). The following Slovenian data suggests that such an analysis cannot be maintained.

As seen in (1), depictives can modify the subject. They always agree with their host. There is no restriction on the grammatical case of the host or the adjective.

- (1) Vid_i je sklenil kupčijo pijan_i.
Vid-NOM AUX made a deal-ACC drunk-NOM
"Vid made a deal drunk"

Depictives also occur in control sentences. They still show agreement with their host argument. In (2), the depictive cannot be associated with the matrix predicate because of its meaning. In (3), although meaning allows it, the depictive cannot be associated with the matrix predicate.

- (2) Vid_i je sklenil Petri zapustiti hišo mrtev_i.
Vid-NOM AUX decided Petra-DAT bequeath-INF house-ACC dead-NOM
"Vid decided to leave the house to Petra after he dies."
- (3) Vid_i ji je sklenil zadevo razložiti trezen_i.
Vid-NOM her-DAT AUX decided matter-ACC explain-INF sober-NOM
"Vid decided to present the matter to her when he is sober"
*✓present sober/ *decide sober*

The depictive can thus only be interpreted as referring to the infinitival but not to the matrix clause. Only if the depictive comes before the infinitival verb, as in (4), can the matrix predicate be understood as having occurred while Vid was sober.

- (4) Vid_i ji je trezen_i sklenil azložiti zadevo.
Vid-NOM her-DAT AUX sober-NOM decided explain-INF matter-ACC
*✓decide sober/ ?present sober (*with neutral intonation)*
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A right-adjunction analysis predicts the availability of the reading where the depictive is associated with the matrix predicate, but this prediction is not borne out. This is corroborated by (5), which is bad because the depictive cannot be associated with the matrix clause, while an association with the embedded infinitival is infelicitous simply because of its duplicate meaning.

- (5) #??Vid_i se ga je odločil napiti pijan;
Vid REFL it AUX decided get-drunkINF drunk
"Vid decided to get drunk when he is drunk"

It is worth noting that this phenomenon raises the puzzle – familiar from the literature on Icelandic control subjects (Sigurdhsson 1991) – of how the depictive adjective receives case. Specifically, how can the depictive adjective get nominative case if it is actually in agreement with the subject of the embedded infinitival clause, with a PRO in Spec TP? PRO does not have NOM case, rather it has a null-case feature checked by the defective T⁰. It seems reasonable that the depictive cannot get null case, but it is unclear how it gets NOM. We refer the reader to Hornstein 2001 for a promising approach to control structures that might address this problem.

References

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