

THE SUBJECT-TO-SUBJECT RAISING RULE IN SLOVENE *

The aim of the present article is to present evidence in support of the claim that the rule which promotes the subject NP of the embedded subject clause to the position of the matrix subject (subject raising, SSR) is a viable rule in Slovene transformational generative grammar.

Linguists dealing with subject raising in English¹ do not fail to point out that the phenomenon was not discovered by transformational grammarians. As long ago as 1927 Jespersen had illustrated his discussion of the conflict between the grammatical and the logical analyses with examples such as (1) and (2):

(1) He happened to fall.

(2) He was sure to fall.

and commented that although the grammatical criterion of subject-verb agreement unhesitatingly singles out the personal pronoun he as the subject of the sentence, considerations of meaning lead one to the conclusion that "/.../" the notional subject /.../ is a neutral idea, namely /.../ the nexus, in which he is the subject-part and to fall the predicate-part. We may express this in an unidiomatic way by saying that the notional subject is he-to-fall.² The suggestion is repeated a decade later in his *Analytic Syntax* where it is observed that one cannot form a reasonable question asking about the subject in (1) by saying "Who happened?" but rather by asking "What happened?" to produce the answer that what happened was that he fell. Jespersen suggested that the syntactic and semantic properties of the split subject constructions, as he termed it, be conveniently captured by the formula $\frac{1}{2} S V \frac{1}{2} S (I O)^3$, the bracketed terms indicating class membership (I, infinitive) and function (O, object) of the second half of the subject ($\frac{1}{2} S$). Within the standard transformational generative approach one of the first attempts to account for the construction was

Rosenbaum's pioneering contribution to the study of the English sentential complementation system in 1967. He argued that a sentence such as (3) be derived from the base structure configuration (4) by means of several (here simplified) derivational steps:

- (3) The students seem to dislike grammar.
- (4) [NP [N^{it}] [S the students dislike grammar]] [VP seem]
- (5) [NP [N^{it}] [S FOR the students TO dislike grammar]]
[VP seem]
- (6) [NP [N^{it}]] [VP seem] [S FOR the students TO dislike
grammar]
- (7) [NP the students] [VP seem] [S FOR TO dislike grammar]
- (8) [NP the students] [VP seem] [S TO dislike grammar]

Rosenbaum's analysis assumed a division between "nominal" (noun-phrase complementation) and "non-nominal" (verb-phrase complementation) embedded clauses and suggested the [NP [N^{it}] S] structure for the former as shown in (4). Since Rosenbaum regarded complementizers (that, for to, Poss -ing) to be meaningless formatives, it was possible to suggest they be introduced into the structure by means of a complementizer insertion transformation (5). The restructuring shown in (6), the result of the extraposition rule, was restricted to operate only on finite and infinitival complement clauses. The effect of the rule was to cancel the NP domination of the complement clause and to attach it to the right of the matrix sentence. The fact that the embedded subject NP ends up as the subject of the matrix clause Rosenbaum explained by the pronoun replacement rule (7), later to be renamed by the Kiparskys (1970) as "raising". The rule was ordered to apply to extraposed non-finite clauses and made sensitive to a subgroup of "raising" verbs and adjectives. The last structure (8) exemplifies obligatory deletion of the part of the complementizer in what has become a subjectless embedded clause.

Rosenbaum's proposals have continued to be improved by a

number of linguists as they tried to apply them to a wider range of data or as they addressed themselves to the more general questions of transformational theory and its role in generative grammar. Bresnan (1970) demonstrated that complementizers are far from being meaningless morphemes and should rather be introduced by a phrase-structure rule ($\bar{S} \rightarrow \text{COMP } S$) into deep structure. The Kiparskys argued that the syntactic form of the complement sentence depends on and may be predicted from the semantic features of the matrix predicate as well as the speaker's presuppositions as to the truth of the embedded proposition. Their attempt to regard the complementation system as an area of predictable syntactic form was taken up by Stockwell (1973), who also argued against Rosenbaum's distinction between noun-phrase and verb-phrase complementation. Postal (1974) tried to maintain the hypothesis, contrary to Chomsky's claim, that grammatical relations play an essential role in a subclass of transformational rules. Chomsky's conception (1973) of transformational theory envisaged transformations as structure-dependent operations where the application of rules is restricted by universal principles rather than an enriched structural index. In Chomsky's approach SSR is seen as a single case of a much more general phenomenon of NP movement. The suggested universal conditions on the application of transformations, the principle of minimal factorization (Chomsky 1977), trace theory (Chomsky 1975) and the notion of control (Chomsky 1977, Chomsky and Lasnik 1977, Chomsky 1980) allow a very simplified formalization of subject raising, general enough to account for derivations not only in (3) but also in (9 - 12):

X, NP, Y, NP, Z \rightarrow 1, 4, 3, 5

(9) Snow melts. \leftarrow Δ melts snow

(10) The dog is believed to be hungry. \leftarrow Δ believed the dog to be hungry

(11) John is easy to please. \leftarrow It is easy to please John.

(12) The book reads easily. \leftarrow Δ reads the book easily.⁴

In the late seventies arguments have been presented (Brame 1976,

Bresnan 1978) which try to undermine the claim for the sentential source of surface infinitival complements.

Slovene grammar (Toporišič 1976, 1982) recognizes several semantic groups of verbs that can be followed in surface structure by an infinitive, suggests its surface syntactic function and points to the nominal role of an infinitival "half-clause" where it can be substituted by a finite clause or an ordinary NP (Toporišič 1976:484).⁵

The assumption that the distinction between "raising" verbs and verbs of obligatory control is a pertinent distinction in Slovene syntax rests on semantic (i. - vi.) as well as syntactic evidence (vii. - ix.). In arguing for this distinction we shall assume that Slovene formal equivalents of the English infinitival complements in structures exemplified by (3) are underlyingly sentential infinitival subjects introduced by the phrase-structure rules $NP \rightarrow N \bar{S}$ and $\bar{S} \rightarrow COMP S$. The proposal is based on the observation, frequently made within the standard approach (Akmajian and Heny 1975) that typical clausal relations can be recognized between the constituents of the preverbal complement structure as well as the fact that the preverbal complement can serve as a target for such clausal processes as interrogation, clitic movement, negation, passive, etc. The internal structure of the preverbal complement, $[_{NP} N \bar{S}]$, where the complement sentence is linked to the phonetically unrealized head of the construction, can be supported by the examples where such a pronominal head item is non-omissible in surface structure, in particular when governed by a preposition. Our suggestion of the NP node as the dominating node above the embedded sentence relies on the standard definition of the derived subject role in transformational generative grammar (Chomsky 1965).⁶

i. One of the first indications that several classes of verbs, that can be followed by an infinitive in surface structure, are to be distinguished in Slovene grammar relies on the requirement that a descriptively adequate grammar should accommodate the fact that some such sequences are ambiguous:

- (13) Špela je utegnila skriti njegovo pismo.
 Špela is might to+hide his letter
 'Špela may have hidden his letter.'
 (13.1) 'It is possible that Špela hid his letter.'
 (13.2) 'Špela managed to hide his letter.'

whereas some others are not:

- (14) Špela je želela skriti njegovo pismo.
 Špela is wanted to+hide his letter
 'Špela wanted to hide his letter.'⁷

The surface structure of (13) is to be analysed as a sequence of the subject NP Špela (feminine, singular, nominative) followed by the finite verb utegniti in the past tense form (the auxiliary verb biti/be in the third person singular present tense form, in person and number agreement with the subject NP, in construction with the past participle form utegnila, in gender and number agreement with the subject NP), in turn followed by the infinitive verb skriti/to hide and its accusative object NP njegovo pismo.

The ambiguity of (13) is shown in readings (13.1) and (13.2) where it is suggested that the first meaning be related to the meaning of the epistemic modal verb may in English expressing the speaker's assessment of the truth of the proposition "Špela hid his letter" and in the derivation of which we shall argue for SSR to have taken place. The second interpretation is structurally related to a group of two-argument matrix verbs where the matrix subject NP acts as the controller of the embedded PRO subject of the infinitival postverbal complement:

- (13.1) [_{NP} [_{N[^]}] [_S [_{COMP} ∅] [_S Špela skriti njegovo pismo]]]
 utegniti
 (13.2) Špela [_{VP} utegniti [_S [_{COMP} ∅] [_S PRO skriti njegovo pismo]]]

"∅" indicates that in Slovene the complementizer of infinitival clauses is not phonetically realized.

That (13) is not the only ambiguous catenative sequence is suggested by (14 - 17):

(14) Jezdec je že hotel zdrsniti s konja.
The rider is already wanted to+slip from the horse

(14.1) 'The rider was about to slip from the horse.'

(14.2) 'The rider wanted to slip from the horse.'

(15) Špela se da prepričati.

(15.1) 'It is possible to convince Špela.'

We disregard here the possible interpretation of 'Špela is easy to convince'. The clitic morfeme se, we suggest, derives from the reflexive passive form of the embedded subject sentence.

(15.2) 'Špela permits to be convinced.'

This time we regard the clitic se as a reflexive personal pronoun moved from the embedded object position and coreferential with the subject NP of the matrix clause.⁸

(16) Špela zna zameriti tvojo odrezavost.⁹

Špela knows to+resent your arrogance

(16.1) 'It is possible that Špela resents your arrogance.'

(16.2) 'Špela knows how to display her resentment of your arrogance.'

(17) Špela je morala skriti njegovo pismo.

Špela is must to+hide his letter

(17.1) 'Špela must have hidden his letter.'

(17.2) 'Špela had to hide his letter.'

If we treat verbs in (13 - 17) as homonyms with two different strict subcategorization features in the lexicon, [$VP __ \#$] and [$VP __ \bar{S}$], we provide for semantically motivated base structures. The approach which would claim that these verbs are always and only two-place, subject control verbs would have to rely on some other means to capture the ambiguities.

ii. Subcategorizing verbs in (13 - 17) as either two-place verbs with a sentential postverbal complement or as one-place verbs with a sentential subject explains why it is that only

in the former case can the surface subject NP be attributed a distinct thematic role in the process denoted by the matrix verb (for instance, in (13.2) the subject NP is an agent of utegniti) and why no such thematic role is conveyed by the surface subject in the underlyingly intransitive structure (13.1). One cannot claim that the NP Špela in (13) under the interpretation (13.1) bears a thematic role of either agent, goal, initiator, etc. to the matrix verb utegniti, although such a relation can easily be established between the surface subject NP and the embedded process skriti. The raising analysis, which claims that the subject role is transformationally derived, has no problems in accommodating this fact since no such relation is claimed to exist in deep structure.

iii. Another bit of evidence for the distinction between control and subject raising verbs in Slovene comes from embedded symmetrical predicates and their property that a change in the order of their arguments does not affect the cognitive meaning (truth functional equivalence) of the sentence. If one claims that the proposition 'Špela igra karte s Petrom' (Špela plays cards with Peter) is true then it must likewise be true that 'Peter igra karte s Špelo' (Peter plays cards with Špela).¹⁰ Under the assumption that the surface subject NP with a raising verb is transformationally derived by means of SSR and the moved NP consequently bears no thematic relation to the matrix verb, it is to be expected that the truth of the proposition will remain constant when the NPs in the embedded clause with a symmetrical predicate change their positions:

- (18) Špela je utegnila igrati karte s Petrom.
 'Špela may have played cards with Peter.'
 = Peter je utegnil igrati karte s Špelo.
 'Peter may have played cards with Špela.'

In the case of the matrix clause containing a control verb, whereby the surface subject NP is understood to be thematically related to the matrix verb, argument switching will affect the truth of the proposition:

- (19) Špela je želela igrati karte s Petrom.
 'Špela wanted to play cards with Peter.'
 ≠ Peter je želel igrati karte s Špelo.
 'Peter wanted to play cards with Špela.'

Examples (18) and (19) confirm our prediction since only the pair of sentences in (18) are truth-functionally equivalent.

iv. A similar argument, again relying on truth-functional equivalence can be built on the paraphrase relations between the active and the passive sentences. It has been pointed out that the truth of the sentence is unaffected irrespective of whether the clause embedded under a raising verb is active or passive (20), whereas the choice between the active and the passive form of the sentence embedded under a verb of control leads to two, truth-independent assertions (21):

- (20) Celó Špela je utegnila pohvaliti Petra.
 'Even Špela may have praised Peter.'
 = Peter je utegnil biti pohvaljen celo od Špele.
 'Peter may have been praised even by Špela.'
 (21) Celó Špela je želela pohvaliti Petra.
 'Even Špela wanted to praise Peter.'
 ≠ Peter je želel biti pohvaljen celo od Špele.
 'Peter wanted to be praised even by Špela.'

v. The distinction between the suggested classes of Slovenian catenative verbs is further supported semantically by selectional restrictions. The argument rests on the hypothesis that lexical insertions take place in base structures and, secondly, that selectional restrictions do not extend across clause boundaries. The suggested intransitive structure of the epistemic modal utegniti predicts that the derived structure will be well-formed as long as the selectional restrictions have been observed in the embedded sentence (22, 23, 24). Control verbs, on the other hand, require selectional restrictions to be adhered to in both, matrix and embedded sentences (25, 26, 27):

- (22) Špela je utegnila pozabiti priti na sestanek.
'Špela may have forgotten to come to the meeting.'
- (23) * Soba je utegnila pozabiti priti na sestanek.
'The room may have forgotten to come to the meeting.'
- (24) Soba je utegnila biti zasedena.
'The room may have been occupied.'
- (25) Špela je želela pozabiti priti na sestanek.
'Špela wanted to forget to come to the meeting.'
- (26) * Soba je želela pozabiti priti na sestanek.
'The room wanted to forget to come to the meeting.'
- (27) * Soba je želela biti zasedena.
'The room wanted to be occupied.'

vi. The suggestion that raising verbs should be kept apart from verbs of obligatory control receives further support from paraphrase relations. In principle, Slovene control verbs permit paraphrasing by a finite *da* (that) clause whose deleted pronominal subject may be interpreted as coreferential with the matrix subject or object NP (28). If it is the case that a raising verb will lend itself to a finite clause complementation, its embedded subject NP will not appear as a matrix subject as well (29):

- (28) Špela želi govoriti s Petrom na samem.
'Špela wants to speak with Peter alone.'
- Špela_i želi, da bi (ona_{i,j}) govorila s Petrom na samem.
'Špela wants that she would speak with Peter alone'
- Špela je naročila Urški govoriti s Petrom na samem.
'Špela told Urška to talk to Peter alone.'
- Špela je naročila Urški_i, da naj (ona_{i,j}) govori s Petrom na samem.
'Špela told Urška that she should speak to Peter alone.'
- (29) Špela kaže izgubiti potrpljenje.
'Špela appears to lose her patience.'

- (29) Kaže, da bo Špela izgubila potrpljenje.
 'It appears that Špela will lose her patience.'
 ?Špela_i kaže, da bo (ona_i) izgubila potrpljenje.
 'Špela appears that she will lose her patience'

Syntactic arguments in support of the distinction between raising and control verbs are threefold.

vii. Raising verbs, but not verbs of control, admit subjectless "weather" propositions in embedded complements:

- (30) Utegnilo bi deževati, vzemi dežnik.
 'It may rain, you'd better take your umbrella.'
 Hotelo je že deževati, ko so se oblaki razpodili.
 'It was about to rain when the clouds dispersed.'
 Moralo je deževati, pločniki so še mokri.
 'It must have been raining, the pavements are still wet.'
 Znalo bi deževati, vzemi dežnik.
 'It may rain, you'd better take your umbrella.'
- (31) * Špela je želela deževati.
 'Špela wanted to rain.'
 * Špela je naročila Petru deževati.
 'Špela told Peter to rain.'
 * Špeli se je studilo deževati.
 'Špela abhorred to rain.'

The distribution of "weather" sentences can be linked to the suggested difference in base structures. The intransitive raising verb structure does not restrict the type of the clause to be embedded, neither is the movement rule itself restricted to apply to only a subclass of embedded subject NPs. Thus it also allows for the empty subject NP to be promoted to the matrix subject position. On the other hand, embedding "weather" sentences in the structures of obligatory control will not satisfy the coreferential ties between the controlling and the controlled NPs.

viii. The second syntactic argument rests on the distribution of idiomatic NPs or sentences. In Slovene the phrase brati nekomu levite ('to take somebody to task,' 'to lecture somebody') contains the lexical item leviti, a plural NP restricted to appearing in a postverbal position after the verb brati/to read in the indicated idiomatic meaning.¹¹ If we now treat the epistemic modal utegniti as a two-place predicate, the grammar will incorrectly predict the derived structure to be ungrammatical since lexical insertion did not observe the restricted distribution (32):

(32) *Leviti utegniti [_S leviti brati se Špeli]

If the modal utegniti is treated as a one-place raising predicate, the acceptable structure (33) is correctly predicted as well-formed:

(33) [_S leviti brati se Špeli] utegniti

(34) Špeli so se utegnili brati leviti.

'Špela may have been taken to task.'

In both cases, (32) and (33), the clitic se derives from the reflexive passive form of the embedded sentence promoting the idiomatic NP to the subject position, thus making it accessible to NP movement in (33).

Similar problems also arise with sentence idioms. Embedding the sentence idiom Luna nosi Špelo. ('The moon carries Špela,' ie. 'Špela is not all there,' 'she acts irrationally') as a complement to a control verb will result in either an ungrammatical structure, or, if acceptable, a structure devoid of idiomatic meaning:

(35) Luna je želela nositi Špelo.

'The moon wants to carry Špela'

(36) Špela je naročila luni nositi Petra.

'Špela told the moon to carry Peter'

(37) Špelo je utegnila nositi luna, da je zavrnila ponudbo.

'The moon may have carried Špela that she turned down the offer'

In contrast to (35) and (36), (37) shows that idiomatic meaning is retained when the sentence idiom is embedded under a raising verb.

ix. The third syntactic evidence, attributed to Perlmutter and Aissen, is based on the fact that only raising verbs admit reflexive passive in the embedded sentence. As already indicated, the reflexive passive in Slovene marks the verb with the clitic morpheme se and promotes the postverbal NP (pisma in (38) to the subject position (39):

(38) NP dostavlja pisma ob nedeljah.
'NP delivers letters on sundays.'

(39) Pisma se dostavljajo ob nedeljah.
'Letters are delivered on sundays.'

If we now embed the reflexive passive sentence as a complement to a raising verb, the embedded subject NP will end up as the surface subject of the derived structure once subject raising has taken place:

(40) Pisma se utegnejo dostavljati ob nedeljah.
'Letters may be delivered on sundays.'

However, if a reflexive passive sentence is inserted as a complement to a verb of control, the resulting structure will be ungrammatical where the selectional restrictions have not been observed (41) or, if they have been respected, the resulting structure will not retain its passive meaning (42):

(41) *Pisma se želijo dostavljati ob nedeljah.
*Pisma želijo [_S PRO dostavljati se ob nedeljah]
'Letters want se to+deliver on sundays'

(42) Poštar se ne želi videti na kolesu.
Poštar ne želi [_S PRO videti se na kolesu]
'The postman doesn't want to see himself on a bicycle.'

Arguments similar to those presented in (i. - ix.) would also lend support to the suggestion that the Slovene class of subject raising verbs may be expanded to include such process

verbs as začeti, pričeti/ to begin; nehati, prenehati, jenjati/ to stop. With the verbs analysed they share the requirement that the complement sentence be infinitival and subject raising obligatory. If the rule is ordered to apply to the output of extraposition, a step needed independently in the description of finite subject clauses, a first approximation of its structural analysis in the standard formulation may be as follows:

X NP VP [\bar{S} [COMP \emptyset] [S NP Y]] --> 1, 5, 3, 4, \emptyset , 6
 1 2 3 4 5 6

conditions: 4 must be \emptyset

3 must be a raising verb

A comparison with the English subject raising predicates suggests that in Slovene there are no formally equivalent adjectival predicates (likely); furthermore, numerous restrictions needed to relate transformationally the sentences in (43) throw doubts as to whether a transformational solution is a viable one:

(43) Špela se je zdela utrujena.

'Špela seems tired.'

Zdelo se je, da je Špela utrujena.

'It seemed that Špela was tired.'

* Špela se je zdela biti utrujena.

'Špela seems to be tired.'

Notes:

* The ideas presented are more fully discussed in the author's current work on the comparison of the selected aspects of English and Slovene sentential complementation.

- 1 Transformational grammar has tried to subsume under a single rule two NP movements, which have come to be known in the late sixties as subject-to-subject and subject-to-object raising. The present article does not discuss the second phenomenon.
- 2 Jespersen, O., 1927, A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles, III; page reference from a reprint in 1961, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 227-229.

- 3 Jespersen, O., 1937, *Analytical Syntax*; page reference from a reprint in 1969, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 46-47.
- 4 Lightfoot, D., 1976, *The Theoretical Implications of Subject Raising*, *Foundations of Language* 14: 257-285.
- 5 Although it does not discuss the properties of infinitival structures in greater detail, one should stress the importance of the observation that there are no cases of infinitival clauses with retained subjects in Slovene (Toporišič, 1982:85).
- 6 Cf. also Delahunty, G. P., 1983, *But Sentential Subjects do Exist*, *Linguistic Analysis*, vol. 12, Number 4:379-398.
- 7 We claim that the Slovene verb *želeti*, contrary to its translation equivalent in English, *want*, is a verb of control, because among other things, it is never the case that the verb appears with an infinitival postverbal complement with a retained, lexically informative subject NP.
- 8 One could account for the reflexive form of the embedded object NP by claiming that lexically unexpanded NPs are removed by a deletion rule allowing the reflexive interpretation rule to disregard the empty nodes.
- 9 *Slovenski pravopis*, 1962, SAZU, Ljubljana, marks the use as substandard.
- 10 The argument is attributed to Comrie.
- 11 *Slovar slovenskega knjižnega jezika*, 1980, SAZU, Ljubljana.

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Povzetek

PRAVILO O DVIGANJU OSEBKA V OSEBEK V SLOVENŠČINI

Namen prispevka je poskusiti utemeljiti pravilo o dviganju osebka v osebek kot eno izmed pravil premeščanja samostalniške besedne zveze slovenske pretvorbene tvorbenne slovnice. Dokazovanje umestnosti pravila sloni na pomenskih in skladenjskih podatkih slovenskega jezika, kot bi jih upošteval standardni model tvorbenne slovnice. V skupini naklonskih glagolov z nedoločniškim polstavkom je predlagano razlikovanje med nadzorovalnimi in dvigovalnimi glagoli. Medtem ko je npr. nadzorovalni želeti v skladenjski podstavi obravnavan kot dvomestni glagol z lastnim osebkom, ki je koreferencialen z neubesedenim osebkom (PRO) nedoločniškega stavka (S), je dvigovalni utegniti enomestni glagol z nedoločniškim stavčnim osebkom. Površinski osebek je pridobil s pretvorbo dviganja osebka vstavljene-ga stavka v položaj osebka nadrednega stavka:

Špela_i želi S PRO_i postati dobra učiteljica

Špela želi postati dobra učiteljica.

S Špela postati dobra učiteljica utegniti

Špela utegne postati dobra učiteljica.