

COMPARATIVE SYNTAX OF SLAVONIC STANDARD LANGUAGES. I. BASIC STRUCTURES OF A SIMPLE SENTENCE

The present book is intended as the first part of a more extensive work to be devoted to the comparison of the syntactic system of contemporary Slavonic standard languages. Attention is paid to each language in its present form only, although the most relevant diachronic facts are taken into account. The term „basic structures“ should be understood as referring to elementary monopropositional sentences (in which, naturally, the finite verb may be implicit) with primary implementation of their semantic, pragmatic and formal parameters. All derived or modified structures are essentially avoided, since the author regards the undogmatic distinction of basic and sentence structures as important and sees it as one of positive contributions of transformational generative syntactology. The whole publication is based on the author's own extensive excerption from texts in all the Slavonic languages, as well as on information about the function of various constructions, provided by native speakers — the author's colleagues and friends.

The contents of this publication can be divided into two large sections. The first deals with general questions concerning the research of the syntax of Slavonic languages. In chapter I the object, aim and general methodology are outlined (§ 1—6), then in chapter II existing important comparative syntactic works are considered (§ 7—13). In chapter III the author outlines his treatment of the material, taking into account the above mentioned dichotomy of basic and derived structures, and an illustration of derivational methodology is given to elucidate the deep and surface structures of concrete utterances (§ 14—22). The next chapter (IV) discusses the general syntactic character of a Slavonic sentence in confrontation with the West-European literary standard (23—29). One common feature of Slavonic languages is the frequent asymmetry of the predicative base of a sentence, which is shown particularly by its surface and sometimes also deep mono-complex-organisation (cf. the frequency of single-member structures and the empty left-valency position of the predicate) and by the absence of formal congruence between the predicate and subject (cf. esp. the predicative instrumental). The final chapter (V) of this general section presents an internal comparison of the differences in characteristics of all twelve Slavonic literary languages (30—40), based on the following criteria: the degree of asymmetry in the formation of a predicative base (32), the functional distribution of the predicators *habere/esse* (32), the various ways of expressing the non-agency perspective (34) and voluntative-modalization (35). References are made to the dependence of syntactic phenomena upon those on a morphologic level (cf. the absence of conjugated forms of the verb *esse* in the present tense in East Slavonic languages, the varying frequency of short/long forms of adjectives, the expression of negation in the compound past, e. g. Cz. *Neviděl jsem ho* :: S.-C. *Nisam ga video*).

Then follows a generalizing and comparative description of the characteristics of the syntactic system of the East Slavonic (37), West Slavonic (38) and South Slavonic regions (39); of course, Polish syntax contains some interesting isoglosses with the East Slavonic region. At the end of the general section are

outlined several hypotheses for the further elaboration of the difference in characteristics of each Slavonic language.

The second, essentially larger section of this book presents a concrete comparative description of basic sentence structures in Slavonic languages. These structures are classified and described from a semantic viewpoint of the predicate which, in the author's opinion, may be divided on a high level of abstraction into the following five extensive classes: (1) process, (2) possession, (3) existence, (4) quality and (5) quantity can all be predicated. At the same time, possession (and existence in part, too) is also dealt with separately with regard to important structural differences on the level of expression, demonstrated here by Slavonic languages. All five classes include only those constructions which contain the left-valency actant of a predicate (grammatical subject), whilst as far as constructions where this is absent are concerned, only process or quality may be predicated.

The description of constructions with a grammatical subject is divided accordingly into five large chapters:

(1) Process is predicated in the wide sense of the word (44—48), and attention is paid, amongst other things, to the question of the implicitness/explicitness of a pronominal subject (46) and of number and formal parameters of obligatory right-valency actants (48).

(2) The predication of possession, in the widest sense of the word (49—59), can be presented under three headings: (a) possession in the strict (50—52, e. g. Cz. *Jan má nově auto*) and (b) in the wide sense of the word (53—58, e. g. Cz. *Jan má už 60 roků, Jarmila má bronzové vlasy*) as well as (c) possessionalization (e. g. Cz. *Dnes máme neděli*). In each case, the author pays particular attention to the functional distribution of three basic models, i. e. the possessive model with *habere* (Cz. *Mám tu knihu*), the adessive one with *esse* + a localizer (R. *U nego jest' kompas*) or with *esse* + dative (B. *Takáv im beše običajat*).

(3) Predicates which give information concerning the existence of the subject (60—78) fall into three categories: semantics of the real existence of a substance (62—69), with the following connotations: of occurrence, disposition and accident; then semantics of the subject in terms of time or space (70—74) and finally semantics marking a situation in nature, time etc. (Cz. *Dnes je úterý, Venku je veliké horko*, 75—78). The functional distribution of the two basic predicator *esse/habere* as well as the application of other existential verbs (e. g. R. *suščestvovat'*, *imet'sja*, *vstrečat'sja*, *naxodit'sja*) are again important.

(4) If the predicate contains an indication of quality in the wide sense of the word (i. e. of qualification or classification with several variants, 79—101), then the expression of the verbal component, i. e. a copula, is dealt with first (80—83); various points connected with the expression of the nominal component are then examined (84—101), viz: the function of the predicative instrumental/nominative (85—90), the interaction of short and long forms of adjectives (91—93), the occurrence of other designators in a position close to a copula (94—101).

(5) The predication of quantity (102—113) is in this work a relative novelty, explained in theory by the author in previous publications (Mrázek 1973, 1978). After the term has been explained and other individual problems interpreted, typical Slavonic constructions are described, the distribution being as follows: indication of the precise number of persons (105—107, e. g. Cz. *Členů výboru je sedm*) and other objects (108), approximation of quantity (109), its sufficiency/non-sufficiency (110), the usage of a quantifying adjective (111, Cz. *Takové případy jsou řádké, hojně*), the dynamics of the expression of quantity (112, Cz. *Vody přibýlo, ubylo*).

The description of basic constructions with no grammatical subject represents the first attempt at a systematic modern elaboration of this extensive field; not included, however, are various subjectless derived formations (such as Cz. *O tom se diskutovalo, Nelze na to zapomínat, Bylo o tom už rozhodnuto*). Preliminary considerations comprise (amongst other things) the delimitation against constructions with a present but implicit neutral subject (117) and the question of a semantic invariant in all constructions without an efficient (= denotative subject). The invariant is represented by information about purely causal phenomena which are beyond the reach of any conscious human intervention and which are spontaneous and stochastic in a lot of cases.

(1) Only process with no efficient is predicated (120—137). The detailed division is no longer primarily semantic (as was previously the case) but rather formal: either the verb itself is sufficient and requires no right-valency-actant (121—122) or it requires just one adverbial (123—124) or one object actant (125—129, classified according to morphological form); it may also require two actants (whereby a semantic point of view is applied on the lowest level, 130—137). Slavonic languages may be said to present a very wide range of types as well as a great number of impersonal constructions containing an autosemantic verb. East Slavonic languages (and Polish in part) are particularly notable in this area, since they use structures of the type R. *Gromom ubilo čeloveka* (137). Slovene is also rich in subjectless constructions. On the other hand such constructions are seldom represented in Bulgarian and Macedonian, whilst German influence has given rise to the appearance of „wono“, „to“ in Sorbian (except for the literary standard). The subject expression „to“ can be used in Czech only if the structure of a situation is interpreted by the speaker as a function of some indefinite/undefined but existing efficient.

(2) If quality is predicated (i. e. a characteristic of a state, 138—155) then the following interpretations (further to the necessary preliminaries, 138—139) are presented: (a) a predicative without any actant (141—142, Cz. *Je blátivo*), (b) with one actant (143 — qualitative states of nature and surroundings, R. *V komnate ujutno*, 144—145 — mental or physical human states, R. *Mne bylo tošno*), (c) with two actants (148—150, R. *U menja radostno na duše*), (d) in the predicative position a substantive is present in an oblique case (151—154) or (e) a complete comparative subordinate sentence (cf. Cz. *Bylo mi, jako bych se znovu narodil*, 155).

The discussion of subjectless basic structures is concluded with an observation on the possibilities of the transformational correlation of single-member and two-member structures (156).

Included in the publication are the following supplements: a list of texts used to gather the primary documental material from the individual Slavonic languages, a list of literature and finally a summary in Czech and English.

