

Inherently reflexive verbs

Reflexive pronouns can be used in a number of ways. Sometimes they just replace ordinary objects (dobj or iobj), sometimes they contribute a reciprocal or passive (auxpass: reflex) meaning. Finally, there are verbs that are obligatorily accompanied by a reflexive pronoun but the pronoun does not contribute any meaning (because it cannot be omitted), nor can it be interpreted as an object (because it cannot be replaced by a noun phrase).

Czech examples

smát se “to laugh”

bát se “to fear”

These verbs cannot appear without the reflexive pronoun *se*. This makes them different from e.g. *umýt se* “to wash oneself” where one can also say *umýt ho* “to wash him”. Dictionary entries list both words (the verb + *se*) together.

We label the relation between inherently reflexive verbs and their reflexive pronouns as **compound: reflex**. This is an analogy to the **compound: prt** in Germanic languages and it reflects the fact that the two words together form a meaning unit.

The most frequent inherently reflexive verbs in the Czech data: *stát se*, *podářit se*, *snažit se*, *zdát se*, *dostat se*.

Croatian examples

nasmijati se “to laugh”

plašiti se “to fear”

The relation between the verb and the reflexive pronoun is mostly labeled **compound** (1018), sometimes **dobj** (51), **auxpass** (10) and there are a few other labels where I am not sure whether they are correct.

The most frequent verbs with **compound se**: *očekivati se*, *nalaziti se*, *navoditi se*, *sastati se*, *nadati se*.

Bulgarian examples

смея-се / смеја-се “to laugh”

боя-се / боја-се “to fear”

There are three reflexive pronouns: *се / se* (2362 occurrences), *си / si* (233), *себе / sebe* (25).

http://lindat.mff.cuni.cz/services/pmltq/ud_bg/

```
a-node $s := [iset/reflex="reflex", parent a-node $v :=  
[tag="VERB"]] >> for $s.form give $1, count() sort by $2 desc, $1
```

Most of them are attached as **expl** (2594), the rest as **dobj** (8), **iobj** (8), **nmod** (8), **cop** (1) and **nsubj** (1).

Тя никога не се смееше с висок глас. / Тја никoга не се смееше с висок глас. “She never laughed aloud.” ... expl(смееше, се)

The most frequent verbs are as follows:

надявам-се 28, разбирам-(се) 28, срещна-(се) 28, върна-(се) 27, окажа-(се) 25, появя-се 23

Spanish examples

Reflexive pronouns exist also in other Indo-European languages but I am not sure how frequent are those that cannot be explained as direct or indirect objects. Here are some examples from Spanish:

irse “to leave”

quedarse “to stay”

levantarse “to get up”

iobj(ir, te); iobj(va, se); iobj(ir, se) ...

iobj(quedan, se)

arrepentirse “to repent” is reportedly one of the few examples where there really is no non-reflexive counterpart (**arrepentir*), not even with a different meaning. Yet the Spanish data still label the relation as **iobj**: *no os arrepentiréis* “don’t repent” ... iobj(arrepentiréis, os).

French examples

There are no features so I cannot search for reflexive pronouns but I take it that it is *se* again.

Almost all occurrences with verbs (1292 out of 1295) are attached as **dobj**. There are also no lemmas; the most frequent verb forms that occur with *se* are *trouve, situe, fait, faire, trouvent*. I do not know whether there are any inherently reflexive verbs.

Italian examples

The pronoun *si* can occur with the feature **ReFLex** or without it. The reflexive occurrences are always attached as **dobj**. Otherwise, the most frequent relation is **expl**. The most frequent verbs are *trovare, chiamare, fare, applicare, trattare*; the most frequent verbs in the reflexive **dobj** context are *accumulare, riferire, ritirare, basare, fare*. I do not know whether there are any verbs that always have the pronoun.

rendere “to give back, render” vs. *rendersi* “to become”

German examples

There are reflexive verbs where there is no counterpart with non-reflexive object, e.g.

sich befinden “to be located”

sich handeln “to concern”

sich erkälten “to catch a cold”

sich bemühen “to strive” (although there is a non-reflexive *jemanden bemühen*, it is rarely used)

They are mostly attached as **dobj**, sometimes as **iobj** or **nmod**: **dobj**(befindet, sich).