

Factivity and indirect question: the case of Russian BESPOKOIT'SJA 'worry'

Zeno Vendler (Vendler 1980) associated factivity of the predicate (i.e. truth presupposition of the embedded clause) with its co-occurrence with indirect question (IQ). Subsequent investigations suggested that what is relevant is not exactly factivity but the component 'know' (also 'don't know', 'want to know', etc) in the semantic decomposition of the predicate. Hence the importance of the difference between predicates of **knowledge** (*know, understand, forget, ...*), which co-occur with IQ, and predicates of **belief** (*believe, suppose, ...*), which usually don't (Karttunen, Zaenen 2005).

An interesting case is represented by the Russian verb *bespokoit'sja* 'worry', which dominates IQ, contradicting all common knowledge about the contexts of accepted IQ: i) *bespokoit'sja* is a verb of emotion, and emotions do not dominate IQ; ii) dividing mental verbs into verbs of knowledge and verbs of belief we'd rather attribute *bespokoit'sja* to verbs of belief, which are assumed not to dominate IQ.

Explanation of this phenomenon is put forward, stemming from this verb's semantic decomposition (suggested by Ju.D. Apresjan, NOSS-2004): it contains a component 'don't know', famous for its predisposition to IQ (Bulygina, Shmelev 1997, Paducheva 2004). In this paper the semantics of *bespokoit'sja* is further explored, with the help of the Russian National Corpus, <http://www.ruscorpora.ru/>.

The verb *bespokoit'sja* in the context of a dependent IQ

Construction with a general question: X *bespokoitsja*, V li = 1) 'X doesn't know whether **situation V takes place**; 2) X wants V to take place; 3) X feels trouble'.

- (a) Igor *bespokoilsja, spravitsja li* Andrej s rol'ju 'Igor worried whether Andrej would cope with the role'

Construction with WH-question: X *bespokoitsja* WH-V = 1) X is unaware of some **parameter of situation V** and doesn't exclude that V is negative; 2) 'X wants V to be positive; 3) X feels trouble'.

- (c) Vladimir *bespokoilsja – kto, v sluchae ego smerti, budet prodolzhat' ego delo?* 'Vladimir worried who would, in case of his death, continue his task'.

The verb *bespokoit'sja* in the context of *that*-clause

Explication for the present or past tense in the dependent clause. X *bespokoitsja* that V = '1) situation V takes or took place [presupposition]; 2) X believes that V is bad or has negative consequences; 3) X feels trouble'.

- (d) Leonja ochen' *bespokoilsja, chto v dome net deneg* 'Leonja worried because there was no money at home'.

Not the same in the context of the future tense – instead of the **presupposition** of existence of a "bad" V, X has an **opinion** that V might take place:

- (e) Marija pervoe vremja *bespokoilas'*, *chto muzh razorit sem'ju na skachkax* 'At first Marija worried that her husband would ruin the family at the races'.

So, we conclude that *bespokoit'sja* can be used as a verb of belief in propositional contexts, the dependent IQ being possible due to the implicit component 'don't know' in its semantics. Thus, the semantics of the Russian *bespokoit'sja* is an important contribution to the problem of factivity in its relation to indirect question.

References

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