Splitting of Possessive NPs and External Possessor in Russian

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When we study syntactic properties of verbs it is natural to start from the assumption that there are more or less regular associations between semantic roles of participants (arguments) and their syntactic positions in a sentence.[*] These associations are called LINKING REGULARITIES, and general rules describing these regularities are called LINKING RULES (see, e.g., Levin and Rappaport Hovav 1995: 1). In fact, the Agent normally occupies the position of the Subject; the Patient surfaces as the (direct) Object, etc.

From the very first steps of Fillmore's theory of deep cases and semantic roles it was realized that one and the same verb, presumably with one and the same (or almost the same) meaning, commonly appears in a wide range of different syntactic frames, see Fillmore 1977. The notion of DIATHESIS, introduced in Mel'čuk and Xolodovič 1970, and the corresponding notion of DIATHETIC SHIFT yield a convenient theoretical frame for investigations in this area. In addition, there are many reasons to believe that diathesis is indispensable in solving the linking problem (understood as the problem of correspondences between a verb's argument structure and the set of its possible surface case frames).

In this paper I deal with so called splitting of Genitive noun phrases in Russian, as in *Glaza Maši sijajut – U Maši sijajut glaza* (lit. 'Masha's eyes brighten' vs. 'At Masha eyes brighten'. I claim that splitting of a Genitive noun phrase (GNP) can be treated as a special type of diathetic shift.

1. Genitive noun phrases

A Genitive noun phrase[1] (when looked upon from the perspective of dependency grammar) consists of a HEAD and a subordinated GENITIVE, be it a single noun in the Genitive case or a noun phrase with a Genitive head (see Borschev and Partee 1999). Splitting of a GNP can be illustrated by examples (1)-(2); what is a single

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[1] Noun phrases with a possessive pronoun behave, in all relevant respects, in the same way as Genitive phrases do; namely, they obey the same rules of splitting: *moj syn pošel – u menja syn pošel v školu* 'my son began his school studies'; *tvoi žaloby nadoeli – ty svoimi žalobami nadoela* 'your complaints annoyed me'.

NP in (1a) and (2a), is split into two syntactically independent constituents in (1b) and (2b)[2]:

(1) a. [Syn   Maši   Smith] [pošel v   školu]
       [son-NOM Masha-GEN Smith] [went to   school]
       'Masha Smith's son began his school studies.'
    b. [U Maši   Smith] [syn]   [pošel v   školu]
       [At Masha-GEN Smith] [son-NOM]   [went to school]
       'Masha Smith, <her> son began his school studies.'

(2) a. [Žaloby   etoj   ženščiny]   [mne nadoeli]
       [complaints-NOM   this-GEN woman-GEN] [I-DAT annoyed]
       'Complaints of this woman annoyed me.'
    b. [Eta   ženščina]   [nadoela mne]   [svoimi   žalobami]
       [this-NOM woman-NOM] [annoyed I-DAT] [her-INSTR complaints-INSTR]
       'This woman annoyed me with her complaints.'

Assuming that Genitive phrases express a possessive relation – in a broad sense – we can call the head of a GNP a POSSESSUM and the Genitive a POSSESSOR; this terminology is used, e.g., in Payne, Barshi (eds.) 1999. Then, according to Kibrik 2000, we have in (1b) a construction with the Possessor EXTRAPOSED (from the GNP) into a topical position as *u Maši Smith* in (1b) (the Possessum *syn* remains in its place), and (2b) exemplifies a construction with the Possessor (*ženščina*) RAISED (from the subordinate to the head position in the GNP) (*zenščina*) and the Possessum (*svoimi žalobami*) extraposed into a peripheral position. In both cases the result is a construction with an EXTERNAL POSSESSOR.

Note that example (2) is not identical to (2'):

(2')a. John's key opened the door.
    b. John opened the door with his key.

In fact, you can say *John opened the door with Mary's key* but not *Mary annoyed me with John's complaints*. The construction with an external Possessor and extraposition of the Possessum were analyzed at length in Arutjunova 1976: 156–161, with such examples as:

(3)   [Ego povedenie] menja udivilo ⇒ [On] udivil menja [svoim povedeniem]
        'His behavior annoyed me.' ⇒ 'He annoyed me with his behavior.'
(4)   [Veličie gor] poražaet ⇒ [Gory] poražajut [svoim veličiem]
        'Splendor of mountains startles.' ⇒ 'Mountains startle with their splendor.'

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[2] Abbreviations used in glosses: ACC (Accusative), GEN (Genitive), DAT (Dative), INSTR (Instrumental), NOM (Nominative).

In Paducheva 1974 (p. 235) the construction represented by such examples as (1b) was interpreted syntactically as a special diathesis of a verb, namely, as a diathesis with a determinant (the term DETERMINANT OF A SENTENCE is attributed to N.Ju. Shvedova; it is mentioned, in connection with GNP splitting, in Iordanskaja and Mel'čuk 1995: 139). This term is used in the context of examples (1) – (4) because the Possessor in its initial syntactic position inside the NP belongs to the Subject NP, while from its position of a determinant it has the whole sentence in its scope – in particular, it serves as a controller for all zero substitutes of the sentence:

(5)   [Mat' *Peti*$_i$] [zarabatyvaet bol'še, čem *ego*$_i$ otec] $\Rightarrow$
       'Peter's mother earns more than his father.'
       [*U Peti*$_i$] [mat' $\varnothing_i$ zarabatyvaet bol'še, čem otec $\varnothing_i$]
       lit. 'At Peter mother earns more than father.'.

In Boguslavskij 1996 (p. 444) determinants are treated as "world-creating operators". In fact, a determinant specifies a world where all relational terms depend, referentially, on one and the same object – namely, that denoted by the determinant.

In Iordanskaja and Mel'čuk 1995 (p. 150) this type of splitting is analyzed at length with examples of possessive NPs with names of body parts as head nouns. This splitting is called focalization.

In this article I proceed to treat split possessive NPs as resulting from diathetic shifts. In fact, in splitting, as well as in the case of a classical diathetic change, the correspondence between semantic roles and syntactic positions of participants changes at least twice. In (1) and (2), for example, two changes took place in going from (1a) to (1b): (i) the possessive valency of the head noun becomes unsaturated; and (ii) the verb acquires an additional syntactic position, namely, that of a Possessor. In (1) *pošel* dominates the Possessor *u Maši Smith*; in (2) *nadoeli* dominates the Possessum *žalobami*). See also example (6) (from Paducheva 1974: 235); when used in the determinant diathesis, the verb *sootvetstvujut* has an additional (as compared with the dictionary-predicted set of semantic roles) syntactic slot – for a determinant (= external Possessor); the verb's arguments lose their syntactic valencies, and it is the determinant *u etix detej* which determines the Possessors of *zanjatija vozrast*:

(6) a. *Zanjatija* etix detej ne *sootvetstvujut* ix vozrastu
       'Occupations of these children do not *correspond* to their age.' $\Rightarrow$
    b. U etix detej zanjatija ne *sootvetstvujut* vozrastu
       lit. 'At these children occupations do not *correspond* to age.'

The difference between ordinary and split diatheses is sometimes marked by a reflexive particle, see examples in (7) and (8) (Apresjan 1974):

(7)   <u>Golova</u> [Nom] <u>kukly</u> [Gen] *vraščaetsja* ⇒ <u>Kukla</u> [Nom] *vraščaet* <u>golovoj</u>
          [Instr]
          '<u>The doll's head</u> *turns.*' ⇒ '<u>The doll</u> *turns* <u>its head.</u>'

(8)   <u>Napravlenie</u>   [Nom] <u>vetra</u> [Gen] *izmenilos'* ⇒ <u>Veter</u> [Nom] *izmenil*
          <u>napravlenie</u> [Acc]
          '<u>The direction of the wind</u> *changed.*' ⇒ '<u>The wind</u> *changed* <u>direction.</u>'

Not every Genitive phrase can be subjected to splitting, and splitting is not possible in just any context. The most important necessary condition is stativity of the predicate. For example, in (1) the construction with external Possessor is only possible because *pošel* 'went' is used in a kind of stative meaning 'now goes to school' (stativity of the predicate is mentioned in this respect in Weiss 1999). Consider the stative predicate in (9a), where splitting is possible, and the non-stative predicate in (9b, where it is not):

(9) a.   [U Maši Smith] [muž] [pisatel']
         'Masha Smith, <her> husband is a writer'.
    b.   *[U Maši Smith] [muž] [podaril mne svoju knigu]
         'Masha Smith, <her> husband gave me his book as a present'.

Splitting in (10a) is only possible because *vyxodit'* 'to come out' is used in its stative meaning:

(10)a.   <u>Okna gostinicy</u> vyxodjat na jug
         'Windows of the inn overlook south.'
     b.   <u>Gostinica</u> vyxodit <u>oknami</u> na jug
         lit. 'The inn looks with its windows to the south.'

A Russian GNP can undergo splitting in the position of the Subject, Object and topical Modifier. Splitting in the position of the Object is highly lexicalized, as shown in Podlesskaya and Rakhilina 1999. We shall therefore limit ourselves to the positions of topical Subject and topical Modifier, as in (14) below.

2. What is the contribution of GNP splitting to the semantic interpretation of a sentence?

What is the motivation for GNP splitting? In other words, what is the contribution of GNP splitting to the semantic interpretation of a sentence?
Splitting is a kind of diathetic change, and as such it must be related to a change of the sentence's communicative structure (the fact that in general diathetic alternations change communicative rank of participants is now beyond doubt, see Mel'čuk 1998: 173). But there is more than that.

In Kibrik 2000, the effect of splitting is described with the help of the notion EMPATHY FOCUS (Chafe 1976; Kuno and Kaburaki 1977: empathy is defined as "the speaker's identification, with varying degrees, <...> with a person who participates in the event"). But there are two other notions that seem to be of more use: AUTONOMOUS REFERENCE (Keenan 1976) and DEPENDENT REFERENCE (Paducheva 1985: 151), in particular, argument dependent reference. For example, the word *syn* 'son' (as other RELATIONAL NAMES, such as *pričina* 'cause', *kraj* 'edge') lack autonomous reference; in (1a) *syn* 'son' referentially depends on the NP *Maša Smith*, which is referentially autonomous. Note that the referential dependence of *syn* on *Maša Smith* remains in (1b) where these words are not syntactically connected.

Keenan (1976) considers autonomous reference to be one of the features of a prototypical subject. This feature of the subject is probably a consequence of its preferably topical position in the beginning of a sentence. Then it is reasonable to suppose that there is a more general principle of sentence structure – namely that of "referential compactness":

> Principle of referential compactness:
> A referentially autonomous NP (in particular, a NP the reference of which is known to the speakers) must be introduced into the denotative space of the utterance earlier than its referentially dependent NPs.

A sentence conforms to the Principle of referential compactness in the maximum degree if it has a unique "referential root" on which all its non-autonomous terms directly or non-directly depend and which occupies a topical position in the sentence. In Russian there are three types of topical positions: subject, as, e.g., in (2b); *U*-determinant, as in (1b); and that of a NP promoted to the beginning of a sentence, as in (11b):

(11)a. [Muž   Maši$_i$]   [pobil   ee$_i$]
     husband-NOM   Masha-GEN$_i$ beat-PAST   she-ACC$_i$
     'Masha's husband beat her.'

  b. [Mašu$_i$ pobil]   [ee$_i$ muž]
     Masha-ACC$_i$ beat-PAST   she-GEN$_i$ husband-NOM
     'Masha, her husband beat her.'

Sentence (1b) is better than (1a) because the Possessor, on which the noun *syn* referentially depend, is in the topical position of an *U*-determinant; (2b) is likewise better than (2a) because the Possessor (upon which the NP *žaloby* referencially depends) is moved to the position of the subject. And (11b) is better than (11a) because the word order change promotes the Possessor (Object) to the sentence initial position.

The degree of compactness is even higher if the REFERENTIAL ROOT (in a topical position) is simultaneously an anaphoric root, controlling pronouns, as in (11b), and zero anaphora, as in (12b):

(12)a. Sintaksičeskie valentnosti *narečij*$_i$ ne sootvetstvujut *ix*$_i$ semantičeskim aktantam
  'Syntactic valencies of (these) *adverbs*$_i$ do not correspond to *their*$_i$ semantic arguments.'

  b. *U narečij*$_i$ sintaksičeskie valentnosti $\varnothing_i$ ne sootvetstvujut semantičeskim aktantam $\varnothing_i$
  lit. '*At* (these) *adverbs*$_i$, syntactic arguments [of $\varnothing_i$] do not correspond to semantic arguments [of $\varnothing_i$].'

The principle of referential compactness plays an important role in sentences with quantifier adjectives; (13b), for example, is essentially better than (13a):

(13)a. Bissektrisa ugla pri veršine *vsjakogo ravnobedrennogo treugol'nika*$_i$ javljaetsja *ego*$_i$ os'ju simmetrii
  'The bisector of the apex angle of *every isosceles triangle*$_i$ is *its*$_i$ axis of symmetry.'

  b. *U vsjakogo ravnobedrennogo treugol'nika*$_i$ bissektrisa ugla pri veršine $\varnothing_i$ javljaetsja os'ju simmetrii $\varnothing_i$
  'In every *isosceles triangle*$_i$ the bisector of the apex angle [of $\varnothing_i$] is *its*$_i$ axis of symmetry.'

In (14), the noun *storona* 'side' depends on not only the focal noun *treugol'nik* 'triangle' , but also *naibol'šij ugol* 'the largest angle':

(14)a. [Protiv naibol'šej storony *treugol'nika*$_i$] [ležit naibol'šij *ego*$_i$ ugol]
  'In front of the biggest side *of the triangle*$_i$ lies *its*$_i$ biggest angle.' $\Rightarrow$

  b. [U *treugol'nika*$_i$] [protiv naibol'šej storony $\varnothing_i$ ležit naibol'šij ugol $\varnothing_i$]
  'In a *triangle*$_i$ in front of the biggest side [of $\varnothing_i$] lies the biggest angle [of $\varnothing_i$].'[3]

Returning now to the notion of empathy, we immediately understand that it is only valid for names of person and can be related to the notion "point-of-view bearer" (PVB) introduced in Paducheva 1978 and illustrated there by example (15):

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[3] Another area where referential dependencies are involved is reflexivization: circularity of referential dependencies (as in *the son of his father*; *the servant of his landlord*) leads to referential failure; it is referentially invalidated – incapable of concrete reference, see Paducheva 1985: 203. Cf. Bach-Peters paradox.

(15)   Odnaždy *car'* žestoko possorilsja so *staršim synom* i v pripadke bešenstva
         izbil ego. Ot strašnogo potrjasenija i poboev *carevič Ivan* sleg i skoro
         umer. Smert' staršego brata otkryla pered Fedorom put' k tronu.
         'Once *the tsar* fiercely quarreled with *his elder son* <PVB is the tsar> and
         in a paroxysm of rage beat him. Of this awful shock and beating *the*
         prince Ivan <PVB is the prince> got ill and soon died. The death of *the*
         elder brother <PVB is Fedor> opened before *Fedor* the way to the
         throne.'

         Meanwhile the notion of referential dependency makes it possible to state
the conditions on GNP splitting in both an adequate and sufficiently general form.
         The notion of empathy focus is demonstrated in Kuno and Kaburaki 1977
with examples of possessive groups with a personal noun phrase in the role of the
Possessor. And in this context this notion is of no use. For example, (16a) is
better than (16b) not because the speaker identifies herself with John but because
John, a referentially autonomous noun, occupies in (16a) the thematic position:

(16)a.   John hit his wife;
    b.   Mary's husband hit her.

         Indeed, the same phenomenon can be demonstrated on verbs with
inanimate participants; for example, (17a) is better than (17b):

(17)a.   Sobytie bolee važno, čem ego pričina
         'The event is more important than its reason.'
    b.   Pričina sobytija menee važna, čem samo sobytie
         'The reason of the event is less important than the event itself.'

         And here the notion of empathy does not apply at all: if participants are
not human beings, then who will the speaker identify herself with? Whose point
of view can s/he take?
         It can be maintained that the speaker takes part in the definition of the
topic. But if we resort to communicative terms it would be the hearer who must
be taken into consideration rather than the speaker. (To be more precise, what the
speaker should do is to take the hearer into consideration.) In fact, it is easier for
the hearer to calculate reference of all referential terms in the utterance if s/he
begins with referentially autonomous term in the topical position.
         As the notion of empathy is defined with insufficient precision, it is
sometimes mixed up with the notion of Observer. For example, in Israeli 1997 (p.
24) the difference between two meanings of *terjat'sja* 'be lost' is ascribed to the
difference in the Speaker's empathy:

(18)a.   Kogda my s Maksimom xodim v univermag, on vsegda *terjaetsja*
         'When Maxim and I go to the supermarket he always gets lost.'

b. Kogda ja vxožu v etot ogromnyj univermag, ja vsegda *terjajus'*
   'When I enter this huge supermarket I am always at a loss.'

Meanwhile it is sufficient to say that two different meanings of *terjat'sja* show themselves in these examples (both registered in dictionaries of Russian). The first, exemplified by (18a), belongs to the semantic field of perception and presupposes a covert Observer in the context of absence of the overt Experiencer. Indeed, *poterjalsja* 'got lost' as well as *našelsja* 'was found', presupposes a person who first had something in his/her field of vision and then ceased to have (or vice versa). In (18b), the verb *terjat'sja* is understood, first and foremost, as denoting emotion: X *poterjalsja* means 'X doesn't know what to do'; no external Observer is presupposed – everything takes place within the Subject's consciousness, although it is true that *terjajus'* in (18b) may allow a coerced meaning – 'got lost'– with an Observer different from the speaker.

Thus, the notion of Observer (introduced in Apresjan 1986; see also Paducheva 2000) seems to be sufficient for such examples as (18).

3. Splitting in the domain of psych verbs

Splitting of GNP is widely spread in the class of emotion verbs. What goes on in the Subject GNP in example (19) is Possessor Raising:

(19)a. [Stat'ja Johna v "Times"] *obidela* menja ⇒
       'John's article in "Times" *offended* me.'
   b. [John] *obidel* menja [svoej stat'ej v "Times"]
       'John *offended* me with his article in "Times".'

The diathetic change in example (19) can be represented schematically as in (19'):

(19')a. <Causer-*Subject*, Experiencer-*Object*> ⇒
     b. <Possessor-*Subject*, Experiencer-*Object*, Possessum-*Periphery*>.

Genitive NP in (19a) consists of the Possessor (*John*) and the Possessum (*stat'ja v "Times"*). As a result of Possessor Raising, the Possessor becomes the Subject while the Possessum becomes a peripheral NP in the Instrumental case. This Possessor-Possessum relation connecting the subject with the Instrumental is claimed to be important for the overall sentence structure.

Splitting of a possessive NP is also possible in the position of the Object:

(20)a. Ja *obidelsja* [na stat'ju Johna v "Times"]
       'I *got offended* by John's article in "Times".' ⇒
   b. Ja *obidelsja* [na Johna] [za ego stat'ju v "Times"]
       'I *got offended* at John for his article in "Times".'

Sentence (20a) is derived from (19a) by what may be called emotive decausativization – the derivation yielding a reflexive verb from a non-reflexive one, see Paducheva 2001. And (20b) can be accounted for as the split of a GNP (occupying the Object position *na*+ACC) in (20a): the Possessor *John* is raised to the rank of a direct dependent of the verb, and the Possessum *stat'ja* is extraposed to a peripheral position.

The role of the *na*+ACC Object in (20a) is Causer, so that *obidet'sja* in (20a) has a diathesis <Experiencer-*Subject*, Causer-*Object*>, while *obidet'sja* in (20b) has a split diathesis <Experiencer-*Subject*, Possessor-*Object*, Possessum-*Periphery*>.

The participants Possessor and Possessum can be called, from the point of view of their role in the situation, the Target (of emotion) and the "Aspect" respectively. In (20b) *John* is the Target, and the role of *stat'ja v "Times"* can be identified as "Aspect".[4]

Splitting of a GNP in the Object position is much less productive: it is normal only for several verbs – *rasserdit'sja*, *razgnevat'sja*, *razozlit'sja* 'to get angry'*, obidet'sja* 'to be offended'. In Arutjunova 1976: 161 these verbs are treated as a special class of HUMAN-ORIENTED emotions and distinguished from other emotion verbs, which are event-oriented, such as *ogorčit'sja*. But outside verbs of emotion it is rather widespread, cf. Object splitting in the context of a speech act verb: [*On osudil*] [*legkomyslennye obeščanija Berlusconi*] 'He blamed Berlusconi for light-minded promises.' ⇒ *On osudil* [*Berlusconi*] [*za legkomyslennye obeščanija*] 'He blamed light-minded promises by Berlusconi.'

Thus, the proposed interpretation of the diathesis in (20b) as generated by splitting has both semantic and syntactic motivation and in this way the "intermediary" structure (20a) with non-split Object is justified – in spite of the fact that it is on the verge of ungrammaticality. (Indeed, in Russian you are usually angry at a human being, not an object.)

The following problem arises in connection with emotion verbs: if Causer and Target are different participants of the situation "emotion" then how can we explain the fact that they cannot co-occur in the context of one and the same verb? In fact, sentence (21), where Causer and Target go together, is not grammatical:

(21)   *Stat'ja v "Times" *rasserdila* menja na Johna
         'The article in "Times" *angered* me at John.'

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[4] The term Target (Rus. *mišen'*), denoting the result of splitting the propositional contents of emotion into its logical subject and predicate, is due to Arutjunova 1976: 163. In Pesetsky 1995 this term is used differently: terms Causer and Target of emotion denote what we think to be one and the same role, the difference is that "Causer is always associated with the *subject* position, and Target associated with the *object* position", Pesetsky 1995: 56. For example, the NP *the article in "Times"* in *Bill was angry at the article in "Times"* is called Target, while in *The article in "Times" angered Bill* it is a Causer. But what is the use of roles if they coincide with syntactic positions?

Our analysis, which treats (20b), with the participant Target, as the result of a split, gives a simple answer to this question: Target appears in a sentence as the result of splitting the participant Causer; this is why it is incompatible with another Causer.

In general, syntactic position of *na*+ACC exists only in the context of a decausative, i.e. a reflexive verb. This fact gives an explanation to a series of examples from Pesetsky 1995 (p. 60):

(22)a. *The article in "Times" *angered* John at the government
        (Russian: *Stat'ja v "Times" *rasserdila* Johna na pravitel'stvo.)
   b.   The article in "Times" made John *angry* at the government
        (Russian: Stat'ja v "Times" zastavila Johna *rasserdit'sja* na pravitel'stvo.)

The Russian translations make the situation transparent: in (22a) we have a causative verb *anger – rasserdit'*, which provides no syntactic position for the participant Target; while in (22b), in the context of a decausative, *make angry – zastavit' rasserdit'sja*, such a position comes into being.

A legitimate question in connection with (22) would be as follows. Why does the splitting of a GNP, e.g., in (23'), give a structure with the Target (*John*) in the Subject position and "Aspect" (*stat'ja v "Times"*) in the periphery – while the opposite is impossible, as in (23''') with "Aspect" in Subject position and Target in the periphery?

(23')   Stat'ja Johna v "Times" menja *rasserdila*
         'John's article in "Times" *angered* me.'

(23'')   John *rasserdil* menja svoej stat'ej v "Times"
         'John *angered* me with his article in "Times".'

(23''') *Stat'ja v "Times" *rasserdila* menja na Johna
          'The article in "Times" *angered* me at John.'

This question has an answer. Of the two successors of the Causer, Target and "Aspect", the privilege of acquiring the rank of the Subject, i.e. the topical rank, belongs to the Target: the Target and the "Aspect" are connected semantically as the Subject and the Predicate; thus, communicatively as topic and focus correspondingly, see Apresjan 1974 (p. 154).

There is another reason for this division of communicative ranks between Target and "Aspect": according to the criterion introduced in section 2, the Possessor must occupy a more topical position than the Possessum because the Possessum referentially depends upon the Possessor. For example, in a genitive NP *stat'ja Johna*, the word *John* denotes a concrete object and is referentially autonomous, while *stat'ja Johna* referentially depends on *John* – the word *stat'ja* has a reference only in this (or some other reference creating) context.

Note that examples (24a-b), from Pesetsky 1995 (p. 63), can be treated as the result of splitting of a GNP and thus constitute perfectly compatible Target and "Aspect":

(24)a. John is irritated at Mary about the mistake
        [= 'John is irritated at Mary's mistake']
   b.   What Mary hates about Sue is her stubbornness
        [= 'Mary hates Sue's stubbornness']

4. Diathesis and interpretation of *U*-phrases

In sections 1–3 we proceeded from the assumption that it is possible to trace a derivational history for any sentence with "displaced" participants. Now we shall see that this is not always the case. Let's look at example (25)[5]:

(25)   Eta problema *obsuždaetsja* u Peškovskogo.
         'This problem *is discussed* in Peshkovsky.'

The problem is how to identify the semantic role of the participant denoted by *U*+Gen NP. In our previous discussion there were no problems with role identification.

The following series of diathetic shifts must be taken into consideration in connection with (25):

(26)a. V svoem Y-e, X *obsuždaet* Z [Y – text]
        'In his Y, X *discusses* Z [Y is a text].'
   b.   V Y-e X-a *obsuždaetsja* Z
        lit. 'In X's Y *is discussed* Z.'
   c.   U X-a *obsuždaetsja* Z
        lit. 'At X *is discussed* Z'.

Example (26) shows that the participant denoted by *U*+Gen NP has a two-fold semantic role. The transition from (26a) to (26b) discloses the mechanism by which the possessive relationship between X and Y makes it possible to preserve X as an implicit Agent. In fact, the Possessor of the modifier NP in (26b) *v* Y-*e* 'in Y' denotes the Agent of *obsuždat'* 'discuss' (*u Peškovskogo obsuždaetsja* Z ⊃ '*Peshkovsky* discusses Z'). The transition from (26b) to (26c) can be interpreted as a metonymic shift – of a highly productive type, when the name of the author denotes the texts s/he created (*u Peškovskogo obsuždaetsja* Z ⊃ 'texts by Peshkovsky contain discussion of Z').

The series of transitions represented by examples (26a)-(26c) is possible for a large class of reflexive verbs; these are speech act verbs – such as *u* X-a *izlagaetsja* 'is expounded', *ogovarivaetsja* 'is stipulated', *rasskazyvaetsja* 'is

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[5] Examples of this kind are discussed in Weiss 1999.

told', *opisyvaetsja* 'is described', *obsuždaetsja* 'is discussed', *soobščaetsja <na pervoj stranice>* 'is reported <on the first page>', *ob'javljaetsja* 'is declared', *otmečaetsja* 'is noted', *zamečaetsja* 'is noticed', *zatragivaetsja* 'is touched upon', *upominaetsja* 'is mentioned' etc. ; and also mental act verbs, but only those which presuppose a result in the form of a text, such as *u X-a issleduetsja, rassleduetsja* 'is investigated', *izučaetsja* 'is studied', *analiziruetsja* 'is analyzed', *vskryvaetsja* 'is brought to light', *vyjasnjaetsja <pričina>* '<the reason> is found out', *opredeljaetsja <tak-to>* 'is defined <in such and such way>', *vyčisljaetsja* 'is calculated', *ustanavlivaetsja* 'is established' etc.

With verbs of a different meaning class we won't get the same interpretation for *U*+Gen NP. For example, in (27) this NP, denoting the array of texts created by X, doesn't express the Agent of the verb *prosleživat'* (the role of Agent is fulfilled by the Observer):

(27)   Eta mysl' *prosleživaetsja* u Tjutčeva
         'This idea *can be traced back* to Tjutchev.'

Thus, the correspondence between roles and positions turns out to be a complex one when we look at it more closely. The diathetic approach helps in a wide range of cases where the linking problem encounters difficulties. But even the diathetic technique, which is based on the assumption of changing one-to-one correspondence between roles and positions, cannot do all the work.

Still there is always hope that new regularities can be detected on the ruins of those rejected.

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