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Factivity status of complements in Croatian/Serbian

Although complements of factive predicates have been the object of great interest since the early seventies (especially Karttunen, Kiparsky/Kiparsky), the theory of factivity as such can be said to be still in its infancy. Consequently, the semantic scope of these predicates is rarely controversially discussed. To begin with, one may for instance ask whether it is really justified to comprise cognitive predicates like *know* on the one hand, and emotive predicates like *regret* on the other, under the same conceptual roof called factivity at all.

First, these two groups of predicates, or more precisely, their complements, show a different semantic and sometimes also morphosyntactic behaviour. True, some languages do not display any different coding with the respective subclass or they do not exhibit special marking of factive complements at all, e.g. German. But a careful look at the literature reveals that other languages, like e.g. most of the Romance languages (cf. Marques 2009) or Turkic (Johanson 2013), as well as Croatian/Serbian do so, albeit in different ways.

Second, and contrary to common practice, it will be argued that cognitive and emotive/evaluative predicates differ also in terms of their epistemic status in that the former are epistemic in nature, whereas the latter are not. This distinction is crucial as it affects the determination of the semantic scope of factives, which usually is said to be a proposition (hence a product of an individual's belief state).

That cognitives and emotives/evaluatives have to be kept apart in general has already been pointed out by Norrick (1978) and can clearly be observed in Croatian/Serbian where complements of emotives/evaluatives may be introduced by a special complementizer *što* 'that'. Admittedly, *što* may in many cases be replaced by the general complementizer *da* 'that', but as will be shown, the substitution is not always acceptable. Further, some peculiarities arise when *što* is used after cognitive predicates, where it must be interpreted as an embedded interrogative establishing a causal relationship. Still, the factual status of the content introduced by *što* is preserved. Interestingly, Serbian and Croatian differ drastically with respect to the acceptance of *što* after cognitive predicates.

The overall aim of the paper is to present data that

- i) reveal some facets of the nature of factivity by showing that the identical marking of causal connections, factive complements and SoAs in some languages is by far not accidental
- ii) illustrate the insufficiency of the widespread assumption that factive complements necessarily refer to propositions as it cannot explain why factives may occur with complements which do not express a proposition
- iii) rise the question of which modalities are actually involved when discussing the SoA-proposition distinction with regard to factives. So far, epistemic modality has played a central role in this respect, whereas the possibility that other modalities may come into question has not been taken into account

The paper focuses mainly on Croatian/Serbian and the relevant data stem from an explorative study with native speakers from Zagreb and Belgrade.

References

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