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The development of emotion predicate complements in Serbian

This paper investigates the development of complementation strategies with emotion predicates in the history of Serbian. The corpus consists of documents from the 12th to the 19th centuries, i.e. up to the period of language standardization.

Emotion predicates, denoting experiences or states triggered by a certain event, situation, action in the real world or by our expectations, imagination etc. (“backward-looking” and “forward-looking” emotions), encompass: (a) factive predicates (‘regret’), (b) non-factive predicates (‘wish’), while a group of predicates allows a both factive and a non-factive reading (‘fear’).

In Old Serbian the semantic features of emotion predicates governed the type of (emerging) complementation strategies, i.e. factive and non-factive predicates had different syntactic encodings, while “neutral” predicates behaved both as factive and non-factive. Non-factive predicates had two strategies, depending on whether the agents of C1 and C2 are the same (infinitives, later *da*-complement) or different (juxtaposition of C1 and C2, later *da*-complement). After a period of competition between different emerging complementation strategies with *jer(e)*, *zašto*, *što – jer(e)* and *zašto* were grammaticalized into causal conjunctions, and *što* into a conjunction/complementizer of factive emotion predicates.

Since the rise of *da*-complements is generally known, the focus of this research is on the rise of *što*-clauses with emotion predicates. It shows that the line between an adverbial and a complement clause can be (diachronically) fuzzy. *Što*-clauses developed from structures with causal adjuncts in C1 (*za* + Acc.) and *relativum generale/particle* in C2, giving correlative structures, witnessed to at the beginning of the 15th c.:

- (1) *nam̃ je za tozi nedrago što bez̃ naše vesti čine*
‘we are not pleased because they are doing it without our knowledge’.

In the next phase correlative *to* was removed: *za to što* > *za što*:

- (2) *mnogo ti ni je usilno i žal zašto ni vi ne upisaste*
‘it is very hard and sad to us because you did not write to us’.

While *zašto* became one of the causal conjunctions, with factive emotion predicates it further developed into *što*, iconically marking a tight causal connection:

- (3) *ovi se onda obraduju još većma što uzimaju đevojku od cara* (early 19th c.)
‘they got even happier because/that they took the girl from the emperor’

At the end of the 18th c. we witness examples with *da*-complements:

- (4) *radue se da se je od nje čovek na svet rodio* (1793)
‘she is happy that man was born from her into this world’.

The spread of *da*-complements with factive emotion predicates, which has been at work for at least two centuries (being quite productive in colloquial speech today), exhibits a change in the syntactic status of C2: causal-complement clause > complement clause.

This paper also addresses the question: without having the intonation contour of a sentence, how do we discern paratactic from hypotactic structures, i.e. a pronoun/particle from a complementizer (or conjunction)? Several aspects of the gradual change particle > complementizer are discussed: word order (discontinuity of correlatives > continuity of correlatives *пазмак* > non-correlative structures; position of enclitics), the loss of hybrid transitional constructions with both oblique arguments and complement clauses, etc.