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Roman Viktorovich Tarasov[1]
Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University
Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication
Department of Applied and Experimental Linguistics

TROPATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS IN SLAVIC MICROLANGUAGES: NATURAL AND CONSTRUCTED FEATURES

Abstract: *This article is dedicated to means and strategies used to express tropative (a meaning 'X considers Y to be Z') in Slavic microlanguages, i.e. ethnolects possessing their own norm, different from those of standard languages and occupying a middle ground between natural and constructed languages. The sample of 10 microlanguages is subdivided into two halves: five authorial literature projects based on varieties of a particular area and five authorless regional ethnolects in order to compare the results for these two groups. Data were received from a short survey of language speakers, (co-) authors or users. The research has shown that these two types of microlanguages use totally different constructions. The results of the research contribute both to typology of tropative and for cross-category typology (typology of languages of different origin) in general.*

Keywords: *Slavic languages, microlanguages, tropative, cross-sectional method, cross-category typology*.

Introduction

The term microlanguage, as applicable to Slavic languages (dialects), was introduced by Dulichenko (1981) and also used in his later papers (e.g. Dulichenko, 2006). Originally, it was meant to denote Slavic languages and dialects lacking an official status. However, for the purposes of this paper, the term microlanguage is used in a more narrow sense, to exclude Slavic minority languages outside the Slavic area (e.g. Upper and Lower Sorbian), which are not regarded as regional varieties

[1] romantarasov2000@yandex.ru

of other languages, making them beyond the scope of the present study. Such an approach is based on Knoll's (2017) recommendations and explained by the purpose of the project, which is to focus on languages that are not genuinely natural nor genuinely constructed. It must also be mentioned that such a category of languages is a purely Slavonic phenomenon unknown among other language groups.

The term tropative was introduced by Larche (1993) to denote a derivation with a meaning of a personal opinion. In later typological papers, it is defined as a "construction meaning 'X considers Y to be Z'" (Jacques, 2023, 158). X, Y and Z treated by Jacques (2023) as estimator, estimee, and parameter are referred to herein as subject, object, and characteristic, respectively (*cf.* Tarasov (2021, 2024)).

This article aims to define and compare the tropative constructions used in microlanguages. For the purpose of this study, I suggest dividing microlanguages into two groups: authorial and authorless. Authorial languages are literary projects based on regional language varieties spoken in a particular area and suggested by a particular author or a group of authors. Due to the fact that formation of authorial microlanguages usually involves significant alteration of local varieties, they cannot be regarded as having fully natural origin. However, they cannot also be regarded as constructed languages due to both having a high degree of naturalness and not corresponding to the criteria of separate languages. Authorless languages are codified regional language varieties lacking known authors. Lesser level of alteration makes these microlanguages only non-natural to the same extent as usual standard languages. Thus, the main criterion of microlanguages classification is a presence of a known author. I hypothesise that different methods of tropative expression are characteristic of microlanguages of different types utilise.

Literature Review and Scope of Research

Here, we provide the current understanding of two relevant areas of research to the current study: microlingusitics and tropatives.

As far as microlanguages are concerned, they are well studied from a sociolinguistic point of view. A lot of papers are dedicated to the history of such languages or their status as a language or a dialect (e.g., (Dulichenko, 1981, 2005; Knoll, 2017)). Papers on grammatical features of microlanguages also exist, for example, (Blinova, 2016) on nominal predicates in Western Polessian; (Biasio 2020) on performatives in Resianic; (Breu, 2012) on indefinite article in microlanguages in general, etc. Moreover, Blinova (2013) attempts to extract constructed elements of the Western Polessian grammar, which is similar to what is done in the present study.

Tropative constructions is a less explored field of study even within general typology. Its study is complicated by the fact that this meaning is rarely mentioned in grammar descriptions. Tropative derivations in Classical Arabic and Japhug, respectively, are examined by Larche (1993) and Jacques (2013). Typological generalizations on tropative expression are also provided in several papers. While Jacques (2023) focuses only on natural languages, excluding "artificial and sign languages [as well as] creoles with Indo-European lexifiers." (p. 162), Tarasov (2021) also provides data on tropative in constructed languages (henceforth conlangs). The HSE Tropative Database (HSE, 2020) also contains data on both natural and constructed languages, as well as four Slavic microlanguages. The Conlang Derivations Database (HSE, 2022) contains data on tropative, causative, and apparetive (meaning 'X seems to be Y') constructions in conlangs, and Tarasov (2024) compares markers of these constructions in oral vs graphic conlangs. According to the conclusions made in these papers, natural and constructed languages utilise different types of tropative constructions; differences between oral and graphic conlangs are also significant. For example, while 1st level tropative constructions were detected both in natural languages (approximately 7%) and graphic conlangs (two of four studied by Tarasov (2024)), no such construction was found in any oral conlang.

However, there are neither tropative studies on microlanguages nor studies comparing tropative strategies of languages with different kinds of genesis (e.g., natural vs. constructed). Thus, besides being the first typological study of tropative constructions in microlanguages, the present paper contributes both to microlanguages typology (in terms of describing its currently unattended aspect) and to cross-category studies of tropative (in terms of studying this concept in one more origin-based category of languages).

Methods

Classification and description of the tropative systems of microlanguages is performed in the same way as done in (Tarasov, 2021, 2024) for natural languages and conlangs, respectively. This classification is similar to that proposed by Jacques (2023). Namely, four levels of tropativity are used. The 1st level (corresponding to morphological estimative in Jacques' (2023) article) includes constructions with tropative incorporated into characteristic Z to derive a verb 'to consider to be Z'. An example of the 1st level construction can be found in Nanai:

(1) *ule* 'good' – *ule-si-uri* 'to consider good' (Tarasov, 2021:p.83)

The 2nd level includes analytical constructions and possessing one finite clause (e.g., *I find him smart*). The 3rd level includes polypredicative constructions expressing all arguments explicitly (e.g., *I think that he is smart*). The 4th level includes constructions not expressing a subject X (e.g., *He is probably smart*). If a language possesses models of different levels, it is classified as belonging to the category of the highest level found (e.g., English has the 2nd level of tropativity).

A tropative system is called direct-reverse symmetric if it possesses reverse constructions (those with a meaning 'Y is considered to be Z') being derived grammatically from direct ones (usually through passive derivation). A system is called positive-negative symmetric if it possesses negative constructions (those with a meaning 'X does not consider Y (Y is not considered) to be Z') derived grammatically from positive ones. A system lacking such constructions is called direct-reverse / positive-negative asymmetric. Usage of analytical strategies (e.g., direct constructions with dummy X, e.g., *They consider him to be intelligent* instead of reverse; special verbs for reverse constructions) along with grammatical does not prevent a system from being symmetric.

The method used for data collection is also identical to that described in the articles mentioned above: Namely, four sentences are provided to speakers of authorless microlanguages and creators/users of authorial microlanguages for translation from Russian or another intermediary language through an online-survey. For providing sentences in foreign languages, examples collected during the natural-language stage of the study are used. Although this method has some disadvantages (inability to explore all the possible constructions or to exclude the existence of a particular construction in a language, etc.), it allows us to collect data on any language irrespective of availability and thoroughness of its grammar descriptions. This advantage is especially important in tropative studies since this construction is not usually mentioned, even in detailed grammar descriptions. Moreover, this method allows us to ensure methodological uniformity with similar studies on other categories of languages and, thus, to enable future cross-category analysis. It is important to note that each microlanguage possessing a tropative system usually utilises more than one strategy of tropative expression; thus, sentences provided in the paper are used as examples and do not refute the existence of other constructions.

The term microlanguage itself is often criticised in Slavic studies (e.g. Knoll, 2011) as being applicable to languages of different categories, including minority languages (Upper and Lower Sorbian in Germany, Resianic in Italy, etc.) and also denoting quite different ethnolects: both literary projects and regional languages.

Although the term in question is used in our paper, these two groups of languages are separated: Five languages from each group are examined.

Authorial microlanguages under consideration are Don Cossack, Western Polessian, Siberian, Pomorean, and Kadkan.

Authorless microlanguages under consideration are Kuban Cossack, Hannakian, Banat, Pomak, and Silesian.

Sentences for translation were offered in Russian, English and—for people not speaking these languages—in Bulgarian or Czech.

Sentences for translation are:

1. I consider him to be intelligent (direct positive tropative)
2. He is considered to be intelligent (reverse positive tropative)
3. I do not consider him to be intelligent (direct negative tropative)
4. He is not considered to be intelligent (reverse negative tropative)

Questionnaires on all of the languages are identical.

The language sample is a convenience sample based on availability of users or speakers. On the one hand, it is unbalanced since all five authorial languages are East Slavic, while only one of five authorless languages (Kuban Cossack) belongs to this branch, two (Hannakian and Silesian) are West Slavic, and the remaining two (Banat and Pomak) are South Slavic. On the other hand, this discrepancy is compensated for by the fact that tropative systems of Slavic languages are similar. According to the database (HSE, 2020), Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Polish, and Czech utilise (among others) 2nd level direct-reverse and positive-negative symmetric models and lack 1st level ones, thus belonging to the 2nd tropativity level. These languages only differ in terms of tropative verb polysemy and case marking.

Results

Authorless languages

It is important to note that Banat[2] and Pomak[3] are varieties of the Bulgarian language. Thus, it seems consistent to compare their tropative constructions with those of Standard Bulgarian. The Standard Bulgarian tropative system is 2nd level, direct-reverse and positive-negative symmetric; it utilises a tropative verb with a

[2] Consists of dialects of the northern part of Bulgaria, as well as Bulgarian dialects of Romania.

[3] Consists of dialects of the southern part of Bulgaria, as well as Bulgarian dialects of Turkey, Albania, and Greece.

polysemy ‘to think’. The Bulgarian version of questionnaire for Banat and Pomak speakers (offered due to informants’ inability to speak English) was based on the translation performed by the Bulgarian language informant V. Paraskevova (personal communication, 15 February 2019) and contained:

(2) *Смята-м* *го* *за* *умен*
Smjata-m go za umen
think-1SG 3SG.ACC for intelligent
‘I consider him to be intelligent’ (Paraskevova, 2019)

(3) *Не* *го* *смята-м* *за* *умен*
Ne *go* *smjata-m* *za* *umen*
NEG 3SG.ACC think-1SG for intelligent
I do not consider him to be intelligent’ (Paraskevova, 2019)

(4) *Той* *(не)* *се* *смята* *за* *умен*
Toj (ne) se smjata za umen
3SG NEG REFL think.3SG for intelligent
‘He is (not) considered to be intelligent’ (Paraskevova, 2019)

It is natural to hypothesise that Banat and Pomak tropative systems are similar to the standard Bulgarian tropative. However, that hypothesis is not borne out. As far as the Banat microlanguage is concerned, it does not utilise reverse constructions but rather direct constructions with dummy X.

These examples were provided by the informant S. Mircheva (personal communication, 15 February 2024):

(5) *Pə* *(ni)* *səm* *smet-əl* *za* *umen*
EVID (NEG) 1SG think-PTCL PREP intelligent.3SG
‘I (do not) consider him to be intelligent’ (Mircheva, 2024)

(6) *Pə* *(ni)* *mysli* *daj* *umen*
EVID (NEG) think.3SG CONJ intelligent.3SG
‘One (does not) consider(s) him to be intelligent’ (Mircheva, 2024)

It is necessary to admit that such constructions exist in most of languages, including Standard Bulgarian:

(7) *Смятат* *го* *за* *умен*
Smjata-t *go* *za* *umen*
think-3PL 3SG.ACC for intelligent
‘They consider him to be intelligent’ = ‘He is considered to be intelligent’ (Paraskevova, 2019)

The difference is that while reverse constructions were found in Standard Bulgarian (along with direct ones with dummy X), they were not found in the Banat microlanguage. At the same time, the Standard Bulgarian and the Banat tropative constructions are similar in the way that both correspond to the 2nd level of tropativity and tropative verb is 'to think' in both the standard language and the microlanguage. Positive-negative symmetry is also a common feature.

As far as the Pomak microlanguage is concerned, 2nd level constructions were not found in it, thus it is classified under the 3rd level of tropativity:

Translations were provided by the informant M. Konte (personal communication, 16 February 2024):.

(8) *(Ne)* *myslem* *da* *ye* *umen*
(NEG) think-1SG CONJ COP.3SG intelligent.3SG
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Konte, 2024)

(9) *Toy* *(ne)* *mysli* *da* *si* *ye* *umen*
3SG NEG think-3SG CONJ REFL COP.3SG itelligent.3SG
'He is (not) considered to be intelligent' (Konte, 2024)

Sentence (8) is a direct construction, while (9) is a reverse construction, both consisting of two clauses joined with the conjunction *da*. It is important to note that such constructions also exist in Standard Bulgarian:

(10) *Смятам* *да* *е* *умен*
Smjata-m *da* *je* *umen*
think-1SG CONJ 3SG.NOM intelligent.3SG
'I think he is intelligent' (Paraskevova, 2019)

But the difference is that while 2nd level constructions were found in Standard Bulgarian (along with 3rd level ones), they were not found in the Pomak microlanguage, thus, tropative systems of these ethnolects belong to different classifications. At the same time, the Standard Bulgarian and the Pomak tropative constructions are similar in the way that both are direct-reverse and positive-negative symmetric, and the tropative verb is 'to think' in both the standard language and the microlanguage.

It is also important to note that Hannakian[4] is a variety of the Czech language, while Silesian[5] is a mediatory variety between Polish and Czech. Thus, it seems consistent to compare their tropative constructions with those of Standard Czech and Standard Polish. The Standard Czech tropative system is 2nd level, direct-reverse

[4] Consists of dialects of Central Moravia.

[5] Consists of dialects of Upper Silesia

and positive-negative symmetric, and it utilises a tropative verb with a polysemy 'to respect'. The Standard Polish tropative is similar to the one in Standard Czech, but with a polysemy 'to have' / 'to take'. The Czech version of the questionnaire for Hannakian speakers (offered due to informants' inability to speak English) was based on the translation performed by the Czech language informant A. Shubrt (personal communication, 17 November 2019) and contained:

(11) *(ne-)* *považ-uji* *ho* *za* *chytr-ého*
(NEG)-respect-1SG 3SG.ACC for intelligent-3SG.ACC
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Shubrt, 2019)

(12) *(ne-)je* *považ-ovan* *za* *chytrého*
(NEG)-COP.3SG respect-PTCL 3SG.ACC for intelligent-3SG.ACC
'He is (not) considered to be intelligent' (Shubrt, 2019)

However, the Hannakian and the Silesian tropative systems are different from those of both Standard Czech and Polish. Namely, the Hannakian microlanguage does not utilise reverse constructions.

Translation was provided by the informant T. Sedlachek (personal communication, 14 February 2024).

(13) *(ne-)ber-o* *ho* *jako* *chetryho*
NEG-take-1SG 3SG.ACC as intelligent-3SG.ACC
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Sedlachek, 2024)

(14) *(ne-)ber-ó* *ho* *jako* *chetryho*
NEG-take-3PL 3SG.ACC as intelligent-3SG.ACC
'They (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Sedlachek, 2024)

The Hannakian tropative system is different from that of Standard Czech in terms of both direct-reverse symmetry and polysemy but similar to it in terms of positive-negative symmetry and tropativity level (which is the 2nd).

The same is true for the Silesian microlanguage. Translation was provided by the informant V. Vanat (personal communication, 17 April 2020).

(15) *(ńy)* *mům* *go* *za* *inteligyntnego*
NEG have.1SG 3SG.ACC for intelligent-3SG.ACC
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Vanat, 2020)

(16) *(ńy)* *maj-ům* *go* *za* *inteligyntnego*
NEG have-3PL 3SG.ACC for intelligent-3SG.ACC
'They (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Vanat, 2020)

The Silesian tropative system is different from those of Standard Polish and Czech in terms of direct-reverse symmetry but similar to both of them in terms of

positive-negative symmetry and tropativity level (which is the 2nd). The tropative verb found in Silesian is typical for Polish rather than Czech.

Finally, Kuban Cossack (Balachka)[6] is a variety of Russian. The Standard Russian tropative system belongs to the 2nd level and is direct-reverse and positive-negative symmetric, with the polysemic tropative verb 'to count'. The Russian version of questionnaire contained:

(17) *Я* *(не)* *счита-ю* *его* *умн-ым*
Ja (ne) sčita-ju jego umn-ym
1SG (NEG) count-1SG 3SG.ACC intelligent-M.INS
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent'

(18) *Он* *(не)* *счита-ет-ся* *умн-ым*
On *(ne)* *sčita-jet-sja* *umn-ym*
3SG.M (NEG) count-3SG-REFL intelligent-M.INS
'He is (not) considered to be intelligent'

The Kuban Cossack microlanguage, unlike other authorless microlanguages also uses 2nd level constructions. Translation was provided by the informant R. Skoibeda (personal communication, 11 May 2020).

(19) *Vin* *čisl-y-ca* *vumn-ym*
3SG.M be.listed-3SG-REFL intelligent-M.INS
'He is considered to be intelligent' (Skoibeda, 2020)

Direct constructions also belong to the 2nd level, but the system is direct-reverse asymmetric:

(20) *Na* *moj-u* *dumk-u* *vin* *vumn-yj*
on 1SG.POS-F opinion-ACC 3SG.M intelligent
'In my opinion, he is intelligent' (Skoibeda, 2020)

Overall, the situation with tropative in authorless microlanguages within the sample is as follows:

- Almost all languages (four out of five) utilise 2nd level constructions, like standard Slavic languages;
- Three languages out of five lack reverse tropative constructions and four languages are direct-reverse asymmetric, unlike standard languages;
- It is also notable that neither of five systems is identical to that of a parent language.

[6] Consists of dialects of Krasnodar Krai, Russia. Балачка—from vernacular balakatj 'to talk'

Authorial languages

It is important to note that Western Polessian[7] is based on a set of varieties of Belarusian and Ukrainian. The tropative systems of Standard Belarusian and Standard Ukrainian are almost identical: Both exhibit the 2nd level, both are direct-reverse and positive-negative symmetric. The only difference is that while Standard Ukrainian utilises a monosemic tropative verb, Standard Belarusian uses a verb 'to count'. For example, positive tropative constructions in these languages look as follows (a — Ukrainian, b — Belarusian; translations are provided by the informants O. Zimovets (personal communication, 13 February 2019) and A. Scherbakova (personal communication, 14 February 2019)):

(21) a. *Я* *вважа-ю* *його* *розумн-ым*
Ja *vvaža-jujoɣo* *rozumn-ym*
1SG consider-1SG 3SG.ACC intelligent-M.INS
'I consider him to be intelligent' (Zimovets, 2019)
b. *Я* *ліч-у* *яго* *разумн-ым*
Ja *lič-u* *jaɣo* *razumn-ym*
1SG count-1SG 3SG.ACC intelligent-M.INS
'I consider him to be intelligent' (Zimovets, 2019)

(22) a. *Він* *вважа-ється-ся* *роз-умн-ым*
Vin *vvaža-jetj-sja* *rozumn-ym*
3SG.M consider-3SG-REFL intelligent-M.INS
'He is considered to be intelligent' (Scherbakova, 2019)
b. *Ён* *ліч-ыц-ца* *раз-умн-ым*
Jon *lič-us-ca* *razumn-ym*
3SG.M count-3SG-REFL intelligent-M.INS
'He is considered to be intelligent' (Scherbakova, 2019)

Polessian utilises the same tropative system, with at least two possible tropative verbs: one is monosemic, while the other is 'to count'. The translations were performed by a Polessian activist M. B.[8] (personal communication, 28 July 2019).

(23) *Ja* *vvaža-ju/ščita-ju* *jogo* *razumn-ym*
1SG consider/count-1SG 3SG.ACC intelligent-M.INS
'I consider him to be intelligent' (B., 2019)

[7] Based on dialects of Polesje (near the Belarus-Ukraine border); formed by M. Shelyagovich.
[8] Anonymised due to lack of consent.

(24) *Vin* *vvaža-jet-sa/ščita-jet-sa* *razumn-ym*
3SG.M consider/count-3SG-REFL intelligent-M.INS
'He is considered to be intelligent' (B., 2019)

The other authorial microlanguages—Don Cossack[9] (Ghutor), Siberian[10], Pomorean[11] and Kadkan[12]—are based on sets of varieties of Russian. Don Cossack, Siberian, and Pomorean use tropative constructions belonging to the 2nd level, direct-reverse, and positive-negative symmetric, while no tropative was found in Kadkan. Siberian is the only one to use the verb 'to count', while Pomorean uses a monosemic verb, and Don Cossack uses the verb 'to respect', which is a difference from Modern Russian.

Don Cossack (Ghutor). Translations were provided by V. Bubleev (personal communication, 10 April 2025):

(25) *Ja* *(nje)* *pəčjeta-ju* *jevo* *za* *bəškavit-ava*
1SG NEG respect-1SG 3SG.ACC for smart-M.ACC
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Bubleev, 2025)

Thus, double accusative is used in direct constructions.

(26) *Von* *(nje)* *pəčjeta-jit-ca* *kag* *bəškavit-yj*
3SG.M NEG respect-3SG-REFL as smart-M.NOM
'He is (not) considered to be intelligent' (Bubleev, 2025)

For reverse constructions, double nominative is used.

Siberian. Translations were provided by the 'Sibirska Volgota' activist P. Gospodinov (personal communication, 17 February 2024).

(27) *Ja* *(ne)* *ššyta-m* *vo* *došl-ym*
1SG NEG count-1SG 3SG.ACC smart-M.INS
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Gospodinov, 2024)

(28) *Von* *(ne)* *ššyta-t-sa* *došl-ym*
3SG.M NEG count-3SG-REFL smart-M.INS
'He is (not) considered to be intelligent' (Gospodinov, 2024)

[9] Based on dialects of Rostov and Volgograd Oblasts of Russia; formed by V. Bubleev and others. Гугор — Don.Cos. dialect, language variety.

[10] Based on dialects of Siberia; formed by the ethnic movement 'Sibirska Voljgota', primarily Y. Zolotarev. Information about Siberian is given for linguistic purposes only irrespective of the political activity of the movement.

[11] Based on dialects of Pomorje; formed by the Pomorean separatist ethnic movement. Information about Pomorean is given for linguistic purposes only irrespective of the political activity of the movement.

[12] Based on dialects of the western part of Yaroslavl Oblast; formed by local activists, primarily S. Temnyatkin.

Pomorean. Translations were provided by the Pomorean activist S. Podnebesnikov (personal communication, 22 February 2024).

(29) *Ja* *(nie)* *pomieka-ju* *jogo* *razumn-ym*
1SG NEG consider-1SG 3SG.ACC smart-M.INS
'I (do not) consider him to be intelligent' (Podnebesnikov, 2024)

(30) *Jon* *(nie)* *pomieka-et-sia* *razumn-ym*
3SG.M NEG consider-3SG-REFL smart-M.INS
'He is (not) considered to be intelligent' (Podnebesnikov, 2024)

As far as Kadkan is concerned, N. Rumyantsev, an activist from Martynovo Village, Yaroslavl Oblast, Russia, stated that this microlanguage is tropativeless, i.e., the content of opinion is expressed without marking it as an opinion: "Your phrases [for translation] confused us.

(31) *Sjorjonjkja* *u* *nas* *prošn-oj*
Sergey.DIM of 1PL.GEN smart-M.NOM
'Our Sergey is smart' (Rumyantsev, 2024)

is a possible option. Translation of your phrases is impossible" (personal communication, 26 February 2024).

Overall, four microlanguages have similar systems that coincide with those of standard languages both in terms of structure and in terms of tropativity level. The only exception is Kadkan, lacking any tropative markers, according to the consultant.

Discussion

This research has found that authorial and authorless microlanguages demonstrate dramatically different behavior in terms of tropative. While authorless microlanguages tend to utilise direct-reverse asymmetric systems, even those without reverse constructions, authorial languages possess symmetric systems. At the same time, positive-negative symmetry is observed in both categories of languages. Further, authorial microlanguages tend to utilise the tropative systems coinciding with those of standard Slavic languages, and authorless languages use completely different systems. Finally, authorial microlanguages that demonstrate polarization (2nd level tropativity vs absence of tropative), while authorless languages show more uniform results. It is thus valuable to compare these results to overall of adjacent language categories, namely, natural and constructed languages.

The analysis of Tarasov's (2021) paper on natural typology of tropative and the HSE (2020) database dedicated to tropative mainly in natural languages led to the

same results. Authorial microlanguages, despite having an author and utilising a significant share of constructed elements, possess tropative patterns preponderant among natural languages whereas authorless microlanguages, despite being more naturalistic, utilise tropative patterns which are uncommon for natural languages.

For example, due to results described in this paper, four authorial microlanguages out of five utilise the 2nd level tropative systems which are also symmetric in both dimensions. The HSE (2020) database points out that this is also the most frequent model of a natural language: 114 languages out of 171 belong to the 2nd level, 105 out of 171 are direct-reverse symmetric and 169 are positive-negative symmetric. 99 languages possess all of these characteristics. For example, the patterns typical for Slavonic languages are also present in Persian:

(32) *Man* *u-rā* *šaxs-e* *hušmand hesāb* *mi-kon-am*
1SG 3SG-ACC person-EZF intelligent count PRES-do-1SG
'I consider him to be intelligent'

(33) *U* *šaxs-e* *hušmand* *hesāb* *mi-šav-ad*
3SG person-EZF intelligent count PRES-become-1SG
'He is considered to be intelligent'

(34) *Man* *u-rā* *šaxs-e* *hušmand hesāb* *ne-mi-kon-am*
1SG 3SG-ACC person-EZF intelligent count NEG-PRES-do-1SG
'I do not consider him to be intelligent'

(35) *U* *šaxs-e* *hušmand* *hesāb* *ne-mi-šav-ad*
3SG person-EZF intelligent count NEG-PRES-become-1SG
'He is not considered to be intelligent' (personal knowledge)

In the examples (33) and (35), the passive meaning is expressed by the verb *šodan* 'to become', while the active meaning in the examples (32) and (34) is expressed by the verb *kardan* 'to do', which are regarded an active-passive pair.

As mentioned before, more than a half of natural languages examined by the HSE (2020) utilise such a tropative system. At the same time, it is not present in any of the authorless microlanguages in question. I certainly do not state that tropative patterns of this category of languages are unknown in natural languages. The Persian language, mentioned above, allows the 3rd level models:

(36) *Man* *hesāb* *mi-kon-am* *ke* *u* *hušmand ast*
1SG count PRES-do-1SG that 3SG intelligent COP.3SG
'I think that he is intelligent' (personal knowledge)

However, the 2nd tropativity level of a language does not exclude existence of lower-level models in it. It is the tropativity level of a language rather than

a construction that makes a difference. Only 41 natural languages out of 171 examined by the HSE (2020) belong to the 3rd level. One of the examples is from Nivkh (provided by an informant A. Khuryun (personal communication, 1 October 2018)):

(37) *Ni* *k'ymly-dj* *if* *k'oγa* *manγ-dj*
1SG think-PRES 3SG intelligent be-PRES
'I think he is intelligent' (Khuryun, 2018)

It must be admitted though that natural 3rd level tropative systems, unlike that of Pomak, are more often direct-reverse asymmetric (sharing this feature with other authorless microlanguages). Thus, paraphrastic direct constructions used in the reverse tropative meaning also exist in natural languages, either in addition to symmetric patterns or as a primary pattern. The difference is that only 66 natural languages out of 171 utilise direct-reverse asymmetric systems with 46 of them lacking reverse constructions totally.

It would also be useful to compare tropative patterns of microlanguages and constructed languages. The conlang which is vital for this paper is Interslavic—a pan-Slavonic zonal auxiliary language. Due to the HSE (2022), it possesses a typical Slavonic tropative system, i.e., belonging to the 2nd level and symmetric in both dimensions. Examples were provided by T. Miara (personal communication, 16 August 2019):

(38) *Domnevam* *jego* *byti* *umn-ym*
consider-1SG 3SG-ACC be intelligent-INS
'I consider him to be intelligent'

(39) *Domneva-je* *se* *byti* *umn-ym*
consider-3SG REFL be intelligent-INS
'He is considered to be intelligent'

(40) *Ne* *domnevam* *jego* *byti* *umn-ym*
NEG consider-1SG 3SG-ACC be intelligent-INS
'I do not consider him to be intelligent'

(41) *Ne* *domneva-je* *se* *byti* *umn-ym*
NEG consider-3SG REFL be intelligent-INS
'He is not considered to be intelligent' (Miara, 2019)

Thus, the tropative system of Interslavic is similar to those of authorial, rather than authorless, microlanguages. The analysis of Tarasov's (2024) paper on tropative and other grammatical functions in conlangs and the HSE (2022)

database dedicated to the same objects found that authorial microlanguages are also more similar to oral conlangs. The HSE (2022) database points out that 11 oral conlangs out of 19 mentioned in it belong to the 2nd level (six of them belong to the 3rd level). Nine of the 2nd level languages are also direct-reverse and ten are positive-negative symmetric (eight are symmetric in both dimensions). Even though this group of languages does not constitute the majority of a sample, this system is the most frequent. Moreover, the analysis of auxiliary languages (those designed for communication of native speakers of different languages and thus similar to microlanguages, serving for communication of native speakers of different language varieties) brings other results: six languages out of ten utilise a typical natural/authorial model (seven are direct-reverse symmetric, nine are positive-negative symmetric, and eight belong to the 3rd level). For example, a system similar to those of Interslavic can be found in Esperanto:

(42) *Mi* *opini-as* *li-n* *sagxa*
1SG consider-PRES 3SG-ACC intelligent
'I consider him to be intelligent'

(43) *Li* *opini-at-as* *sagxa*
3SG consider-PASS-PRES intelligent
'He is considered to be intelligent'

(44) *Mi* *ne* *opini-as* *li-n* *sagxa*
1SG NEG consider-PRES 3SG-ACC intelligent
'I do not consider him to be intelligent'

(45) *Li* *ne* *opini-at-as* *sagxa*
3SG NEG consider-PASS-PRES intelligent
'He is not considered to be intelligent' (Tarasov, 2024:p.154)

Only six conlangs, including two auxiliary languages described by the HSE (2022) utilise the 3rd level models. The tropative systems of these languages are also direct-reverse asymmetric. An example from Lidepla was provided by D. Ivanov (personal communication, 8 April 2021)

(46) *Me* *opini* *ke* *ta* *es* *intele*
1SG think that 3SG COP.3SG intelligent
'I consider him to be intelligent'

(47) *Oni* *opini* *ke* *ta* *es* *intele*
INDEF think that 3SG COP.3SG intelligent
'One considers him to be intelligent'

Again, the shares of different tropative patterns constitute the difference between constructed languages and authorless microlanguages.

An important limitation of this study is that the samples are not large enough to make definitive general statements; however, preliminary conclusions can still be made. Both authorial and authorless languages (excluding Kadkan) utilise constructions typical for natural languages (as per (HSE, 2020)), which is expected due to their proximity to natural Slavonic languages. However, authorial microlanguages demonstrate more similarity with both Slavonic languages (including Interslavic) and other languages of both major categories: natural and constructed. This pattern might be explained by the fact that an authorial language is formed consciously from a set of varieties, and an author chooses a system which is closer to that of a standard language (consciously or not). It might also be the case that a system which is typical for the majority of natural languages is (again, consciously or not) regarded as the most proper and the easiest for comprehension. However, these are only hypotheses, which cannot be decently supported by the research thus far.

Another hypothesis originating from the results of this study is that the origin of a language (natural/constructed/intermediary, and in the case of constructed language: the degree of naturalness) can affect the type of grammatical (e.g., tropative, apparetive) system it uses. This hypothesis is also supported by Tarasov (2024). It is stated in that article that there is a significant difference between a typical tropative/apparetive system of a natural language and of a conlang (and moreover, between an oral and a graphical conlang). A larger sample of microlanguages should be included into cross-category analyses, along with other languages that occupy a middle ground between natural and constructed ones, so that these hypotheses can be further tested.

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Роман Викторович Тарасов
Казањски (Приволшки) државни универзитет
Институт за филологију и међукултурну комуникацију
Одјељење за примијењену и експерименталну лингвистику

ТРОПАТИВНЕ КОНСТРУКЦИЈЕ У СЛОВЕНСКИМ МИКРОЈЕЗИЦИМА: ПРИРОДНЕ И ВЈЕШТАЧКЕ ОСОБИНЕ

Резиме

Рад је посвећен средствима и стратегијама коришћеним при истраживању тропатива (гдје значење X сматра Y-а Z-ом) у словенским микројезицима, односно етнолектима који заузимају међупозицију између природних и вјештачких језика и самим тим посједују своју норму, различиту од норми стандардних језика. Узорковање од 10 микројезика подијељено је на два дијела како би се упоредили резултати у ове двије групе: пет ауторских књижевних пројеката заснованих на варијететима одређеног подручја и пет неауторизованих регионалних етнолекта. Подаци су добијени у краткој анкети изворних говорника, коаутора или корисника. Истраживање је показало да ова два типа микројезика користе потпуно различите конструкције. Резултати истраживања доприносе како типологији тропатива тако и међукатегоријској типологији (типологија језика различитог поријекла) уопште.

▸ ***Кључне ријечи*:** словенски језици, микројезици, тропатив, метода попречног пресјека, међукатегоријска типологија.

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