

Bulgarian Reportative as a Conventional Implicature

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The Bulgarian Reportative

- A marking on the verb,
- Indicates that the speaker does not have direct evidence for the proposition, and therefore does not wish to commit.
- When on the matrix verb
 - generally acceptable in lack of direct evidence
 - generally bad when direct evidence is present

(1) Ivan celunal Maria. #Az gi vidjax
Ivan kiss-REP Maria. I them see
'Ivan apparently kissed Maria. I saw them.'

1. A Modal associated with a Presupposition Roumyana Pancheva 1997

Bulgarian evidentials are modal operators:

- default universal quantificational force
- presupposition that the speaker does not have direct evidence of the statement he is making.

Problems:

- That speaker's knowledge is indirect cannot be a presupposition
- It cannot be plugged (see handout)
- always speaker oriented (see handout)
- The modal operator analysis is too weak for embedded reportative.

2. Non Modal Account: Uli Sauerland and Mathias Schenner 2007

•The Reportative consist of two parts:

- **presupposition part** : y has in world v indirect evidence of p
- **assertion part**: p (No modal operator)

•Obligatory in the lack of direct evidence.

•Cannot be used if the speaker has direct evidence to the contrary, the dubitative must be used instead.

Problems:

- The reportative cannot involve a presupposition (see handout).
- The assertion is too strong for matrix clauses: Implies that reportative marking cannot be used when the speaker has direct evidence that the proposition is false
- That is not the case for embedded verbs (see Table B)
- For matrix clauses there is a Conversational implicature explanation: why say something you believe is false?
- With correct intonation they are acceptable
- The dubitative form is also bad in matrix clauses

The Data

- A set of sentences involving different options for REP marking on verbs
- Four Bulgarian Native speakers
- A set of scenarios, each involving a different knowledge status, relative to which the sentences were evaluated

Table A: Marina *tell* Peter that Ivan *kiss* Ana

Tell (MV)	Direct Ev			Indirect Ev			
	Prop. OK	Tell (MV)	Kiss (EV)	Prop. OK	Tell (MV)	Kiss (EV)	
Kiss (EV)	Direct Ev.	4/4	-Rep	-Rep	2/4	-Rep	-Rep
		2/4	-Rep	+Rep	2/4	-Rep	+Rep
		0/4	+Rep	-Rep	3/4	+Rep	-Rep
		0/4	+Rep	+Rep	1/4	+Rep	+Rep
Indirect Ev.	2/4	-Rep	-Rep	2/4	-Rep	-Rep	
	4/4	-Rep	+Rep	2/4	-Rep	+Rep	
	0/4	+Rep	-Rep	1/4	+Rep	-Rep	
	0/4	+Rep	+Rep	4/4	+Rep	+Rep	

Table B: Marina *tell* that Ivan *like* Ana
Contradicting direct evidence available

Tell (MV)	Direct Ev			Indirect Ev			
	Prop. OK	Tell (MV)	Like (EV)	Prop. OK	Tell (MV)	Like (EV)	
Like(EV)	Indirect Ev.	4/4	-Rep	-Rep	1/4	-Rep	-Rep
		4/4	-Rep	+Rep	1/4	-Rep	+Rep
		0/4	+Rep	-Rep	4/4	+Rep	-Rep
		0/4	+Rep	+Rep	4/4	+Rep	+Rep

Some people accept the reportative form on embedded verbs even in the presence of direct evidence. Why? They interpret these sentences as the speaker referring to the indirect evidence he has (i.e., the hearsay) rather than the direct evidence.

A Sketch of an analysis as a CI

Conventional Implicatures (Potts 2005):

meaning triggers that:

- Contribute to meaning in a conventional way, hence non cancelable
- Are not part of the at-issue content, but may take part of at-issue content as arguments
- Do not take narrow scope with respect to at issue content and therefore invariant under plugs to presuppositions
- Speaker oriented, except in quotations.

The fact that the speaker does not convey direct information when using the Bulgarian reportative is a Conventional Implicature, not a presupposition.

- It is always speaker oriented (does not shift even under embedding)
- Cannot be plugged (also shows that it is not a presupposition)

Meaning:

- The speaker commits to having indirect (hearsay) evidence that p

•Attempt I:

- CB_i : the indirect evidence conversational background
- CB_D : the direct evidence conversational background
- CB_R : the reported (hearsay) evidence conversational background
- $CB_D \subseteq CB_i, CB_R \subseteq CB_i$
- The speaker utters Rep-p if CB_R entails p:
- **Problem:** the speaker can use Rep-p even if he has direct evidence that contradicts p (would entail that necessarily CB_D is not a subset of CB_R)

• Attempt II:

- The speaker utters Rep-p if CB_R supports p.
- **Even Bigger Problem:** the speaker can have indirect information supporting both p and $\neg p$:

(2) Marina mi kaza che Ivan celunal Ana, no Katja mi kaza che Ivan ne ja celunal
Marina me tell that Ivan kiss-REP Ana, but Katja me tell that Ivan neg her kiss-Rep
'Marina told me that Ivan apparently kissed Ana, but Katja told me that Ivan apparently didn't kiss her'

•Attempt III:

- The speaker utters Rep-p if there is a subset of CB_R , S that supports p.

• Reportative evidence can be combined:

(3) Marina mi kaza che Ivan celunal Ana, a Katja mi kaza che Ivan celunal Maya
Marina me tell that Ivan kiss-REP Ana, and Katja me tell that Ivan kiss-Rep Maya
'Marina told me that Ivan apparently kissed Ana, and Katja told me that Ivan apparently kissed Maya'

(4) Ivan celunal Ana i Maya
Ivan kiss-REP Ana and Maya
'Ivan apparently kissed Ana and Maya'

(3) entails (4), even though the information sources are different

•What does it mean that S supports p?

- Increases the chances that p is correct.
- most of S "covers" most of p (the intersection between S-worlds and p-worlds is big enough).

•Lack of reportative marking does not commit the speaker to having direct knowledge, this is a conversational implicature, which can be cancelled:

If the speaker does not use the reportative, by Maxims of Grice and in the lack of contradicting information the hearer will infer that the speaker has direct evidence.