

The Bulgarian Reportative as a Conventional Implicature

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1 Basic Facts

- The reportative in Bulgarian conveys the information that the speaker’s knowledge is indirect, and therefore he does not wish to commit to it ¹.

(1) *Maria celunala Ivan*
Maria kiss-3sg-Rep Ivan
‘Maria reportedly kissed Ivan’

2 Why the Reportative cannot be a Presupposition

- **Previous analyses:** The Bulgarian reportative contains a presupposition- the fact that the speaker does not commit to having direct evidence for the proposition he is uttering is a presupposition.
- Problems:
 - The “non commitment” of the speaker is new information, therefore it cannot be presupposed
 - Reportatives are always speaker oriented, they do not shift even in embedded contexts.
 - Reportatives cannot be plugged²:

(2) *Ivan celunal Ana. #Az go vidjax*
Ivan kiss-REP-3sg Ana. I him see-1sg-aorist
‘Ivan apparently kissed Ana. I saw him’

(3) *Maria mi kaza che Ivan celunal Ana. Tja go*
Maria me tell-3sg-aorist that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana. She him
vidjala.
see-3sg-Rep
‘Maria told me that Ivan apparently kissed Ana. She apparently saw him.’

¹The following example is dapted from [2]

²Example (2) is also adapted from [2]

- (4) *Maria mi kaza che Ivan celunal Ana. #Az go*
 Maria me tell-3sg-aorist that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana. I him
vidjax.
 see-1sg-aorist.

‘Maria told me that Ivan apparently kissed Ana. I saw him.’

- * Example (2) :the usage of Rep indicates that the speaker does not have direct knowledge of Ivan kissing Ana. Therefore, following with *I saw him* is infelicitous.
- * (3) is felicitous. The Rep marker in this example is interpreted with respect to the speaker, that is, it is the speaker, and not Maria that does not have direct knowledge that Ivan kissed Ana. It is possible that Maria has direct knowledge that Ivan kissed Ana, therefore the addition of *she saw him* is felicitous.
- * (4): Adding *I saw him* is infelicitous. \Rightarrow When the Rep form is used it must refer to the speaker. (If the speaker has seen Ivan kissing Maria, he has direct knowledge of that, and the usage of REP will be infelicitous.)

Main Points

1. The Rep doesn’t have to be interpreted with respect to the embedded subject (3)
2. The Rep cannot be interpreted with respect to the embedded subject (4).

\Rightarrow The inference that the knowledge is indirect cannot be plugged under embeddings, and thus the reportative in Bulgarian behave differently than presuppositions.

3 Why an Analysis as a Threshold Lowering Operator is not Enough

- Davis et al. (2007): Evidentials are threshold lowering operators.
 - A probability distribution for a countable set of worlds W is a function P from subsets of W to real numbers in $[0, 1]$, obeying some standard requirements³.

$$P(-|q) := \frac{P(p \cap q)}{P(p)}$$
 - Every proposition is assigned a probability relative to an agent A and a context c :

$$C_{A,c}(p) := P(-|Dox_{A,c}).$$
 - The subjective probability distribution for a context c is $P_c := P(-|c_{CG})$, where $c_{CG} \subseteq W$ is the common ground for the discourse participants of c .
 - Every context has a quality threshold $c_\tau \in [0, 1]$, and an agent will felicitously assert p in context c_τ iff $C_{A,c}(p) \geq c_\tau$
 - φ_{ev} is a proposition that a situation in which an agent has ev-type evidence for p is also a situation in which p is true. Then $\mu_c(ev) := P_c(\varphi_{ev})$ maps pairs of context and evidential morphemes to the probabilities.
 - Evidentials lower the context threshold c_τ in the following way: Whenever an evidential is uttered the threshold is changed from c_τ to $\mu_c(ev)$. The threshold lowering occurs before the speech act occurs.

³See [1] for details

- This can account nicely for the matrix clause reportatives.
- Problem with embedded reportatives:
 - In embedded context, p is not asserted in the first place (p does not follow from “Maria said that p”).
 - p is not asserted, therefore there is no need to lower the threshold.
 - Then what is the function of the reportative in embedded clauses?
 - The reportative has to express something about the clause it appears in as well.

4 The Data

Four Bulgarian native speakers were presented with the following scenarios and were asked to give judgements about the sentences beneath each scenario. The sentences were given in Bulgarian and the scenarios were written in English or Bulgarian (depending on the subjects language preferences).

Evaluate the sentences below as ”good” (ok), ”marginal” (?#) and ”bad” (#).

Case 1: I have seen Ivan kissing Ana.

- (1) *Ivan celuna Ana.*
Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
‘Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (2) *Ivan celunal Ana.*
Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
‘Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

Case2: I have not seen Ivan kissing Ana, but someone (Marina) has told me:

- (3) *Ivan celuna Ana.*
Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
‘Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (4) *Ivan celunal Ana.*
Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
‘Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’
- (5) *Marina mi kaza che Ivan celuna Ana.*
Marina me tell-3sg-aorist that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
‘Marina told me that Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (6) *Marina mi kaza che Ivan celunal Ana.*
Marina me tell-3sg-aorist that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
‘Marina told me that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’
- (7) *Marina mi kazala che Ivan celuna Ana.*
Marina me tell-3sg-Rep that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
‘Marina reportedly told me that Ivan kissed Ana.’

- (8) *Marina mi kazala che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina me tell-3sg-Rep that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told me that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

Case three: I have not seen Ivan and Ana kissing. However, I have heard (from a third party) that Marina told Peter that they kissed.

- (9) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (10) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’
- (11) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (12) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

Case four: I have seen Ivan and Ana kissing. Further, I have heard (from a third party) that Marina told Peter that they kissed.

- (13) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (14) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’
- (15) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (16) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

Case Five: I have not seen Ivan and Ana kissing. But, I have overheard Marina telling Peter that they kissed.

- (17) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’
- (18) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

(19) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’

(20) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

Case Six: I have seen Ivan and Ana kissing and I have overheard Marina telling Peter that they kissed.

(21) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’

(22) *Marina kaza na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

(23) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celuna Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-aorist Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan kissed Ana.’

(24) *Marina kazala na Peter che Ivan celunal Ana.*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep to Peter that Ivan kiss-3sg-Rep Ana.
 ‘Marina reportedly told Peter that Ivan reportedly kissed Ana.’

Case seven: Suppose that I know for a fact that Ivan doesn’t like Ana, and I overhear Marina telling people that Ivan really likes Ana.

(25) *Marina razpravja che Ivan haresva Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-pres that Ivan like-3sg-pres Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is telling (people) that Ivan likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’

(26) *Marina razpravja che Ivan haresval Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-pres that Ivan like-3sg-Rep Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is telling (people) that Ivan reportedly likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’

(27) *Marina razpravjala che Ivan haresva Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep that Ivan like-3sg-pres Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is reportedly telling (people) that Ivan likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’

(28) *Marina razpravjala che Ivan haresval Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep that Ivan like-3sg-Rep Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is reportedly telling (people) that Ivan reportedly likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’

Case Eight: Suppose that I know for a fact that Ivan doesn’t like Ana, and Peter tells me that Marina is telling people that Ivan really likes Ana (but I have not heard myself Marina telling people that).

(29) *Marina razpravja che Ivan haresva Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-pres that Ivan like-3sg-pres Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is telling (people) that Ivan likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’

- (30) *Marina razpravja che Ivan haresval Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-pres that Ivan like-3sg-Rep Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is telling (people) that Ivan reportedly likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’
- (31) *Marina razpravjala che Ivan haresva Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep that Ivan like-3sg-pres Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-pres
 ‘Marina is reportedly telling (people) that Ivan likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’
- (32) *Marina razpravjala che Ivan haresval Ana, no toj ne ja ponasja*
 Marina tell-3sg-Rep that Ivan like-3sg-Rep Ana, but he Neg her stand-3sg-Rep
 ‘Marina is reportedly telling (people) that Ivan reportedly likes Ana, but he can’t stand her.’

Case Nine: Marina tells me that Todor has red hair, but I know for a fact that he has black hair⁴.

- (33) *Marina kaza che Todor ima chervena kosa, no kosata mu*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist that Todor have-3sg-pres red hair, but hair-the his
e cherna
 be-3sg-pres black
 ‘Marina said that Todor as red hair, but his hair is black’
- (34) *Marina kaza che Todor imal chervena kosa, no kosata mu*
 Marina tell-3sg-aorist that Todor has-3sg-Rep red hair, but hair-the his
e cherna
 be-3sg-pres black
 ‘Marina said that Todor reportedly has red hair, but his hair is black’

⁴The example was adapted from [6]

4.1 Summary of Results

No.	Ok	Bad	Not sure	Rep in main V	Rep on emb. V	knowledge state
1	4	0	0	no	-	Case 1
2	1	3	0	yes	-	
3	2	2	0	no	-	Case2
4	4	0	0	yes	-	
5	1	2	1	no	no	
6	4	0	0	no	yes	
7	0	4	0	yes	no	
8	0	4	0	yes	yes	
9	2	2	0	no	no	Case 3
10	2	2	0	no	yes	
11	1	3	0	yes	no	
12	4	0	0	yes	yes	
13	2	2	0	no	no	Case4
14	2	2	0	no	yes	
15	3	1	0	yes	no	
16	1	3	0	yes	yes	
17	2	2	0	no	no	Case 5
18	4	0	0	no	yes	
19	0	4	0	yes	no	
20	0	4	0	yes	yes	
21	4	0	0	no	no	Case 6
22	2	2	0	no	yes	
23	0	4	0	yes	no	
24	0	4	0	yes	yes	
25	4	0	0	no	no	Case 7
26	4	0	0	no	yes	
27	0	4	0	yes	no	
28	0	4	0	yes	yes	
29	1	3	0	no	no	Case 8
30	1	3	0	no	yes	
31	4	0	0	yes	no	
32	4	0	0	yes	yes	
33	4	0	0	no	no	Case 9
34	4	0	0	no	yes	

References

- [1] Davis, Chris, Christopher Potts and Margaret Speas. 2007. "The Pragmatic Values of Evidential Sentences." presented at SALT
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