Labile verbs in Old Church Slavonic as realizations of distinct voice phenomena

Old Church Slavonic contains a great number of verbs which can be classified as labile verbs. They can be used in the transitive way and in the intransitive context, when accompanied with the clitic element *sę* (see *Codex Marianus* from *Corpus PROIEL*) for the source of our examples). We will argue that in fact these verbs should be represented as identical lexical structures with the proviso that the transitive use is associated with the active voice projection, while the *sę* construction with the middle voice projection.

The arguments for such a solution include the semantics of *sę* constructions, which show properties of the middle voice as defined by Kemmer (1993) (as including anticausatives (1), statives (2), subject experiencer verbs (3), impersonals, etc.). The clause specifies the referential affected argument and the external (agentive) argument is typically not specified altogether. In rare cases *otŭ* phrases introduce other participants in the predication (typically non-agentive ones, cf. Madariaga 2010). The structure also contains the clitic element *sę*, which in modern Indo-European languages frequently functions as the middle voice marker (Alexiadou 2010, Alexiadou and Doron 2012, Author 2017).

Additionally, OCS possesses, apart from labile verb pairs with active and middle voice structure, middle deponents – which seems to show that the construction framework of linguistic description provides a better explanation for the state of Old Church Slavonic than the lexicalist model: voice is not a lexical element dependent on particular lexical items, but rather an independent grammatical category – to be represented in terms of voice projections in a morpho-syntactic construction.

The constructions with *sę* should not be treated as reflexive uses of the transitive verbs since their middle semantics it never accompanied with the use of the full variant *sebe* of the accusative case of the reflexive pronoun (cf. Lunt 2001, Brajerski 1966. We will treat *sę* as the element marking the middle voice construction. The verbs in clearly reflexive constructions in fact do not seem to appear with *sę*, which woud be unexpected were *sę* a weak variant of *sebe*. The staus of the clitic as a grammatical exponent, and not as a pronominal realisation of the internal argument, is also supported by some cases in which *sę* is spelled together with the verb.

(1) *čto*   *hoštǫ*   *ašte juže i*
     which.ACC.SG   want.IND.PRES.1ST.SG   in order to also
     vŭzgorě   *sę*
     enflame.IND.AOR.ACT.3RD.SG   REFL
     'which I want to have come into flames'

(2) *oděnie*   *ego*   *bliscaję*
     clothes.NOM.SG   his.GEN.3RD. SG   glisten.PART.PRES.ACT.NOM.SG
     sę
     REFL
     'His clothes glisten.'

(3) *blažněhǫ*   *sę*   *o*   *nemŭ*
     doubt.IND.IMP.ACT.3RD.PL   REFL about   he.LOC.3RD.SG
     '[They] doubted about him.'

References:

Alexiadou Artemis & Doron Edith. 2012. The syntactic construction of two non-active voices: passive and middle. *Journal of Linguistics* 48. 1-34.

Alexiadou, Artemis. 2010. On the morpho-syntax of (anti)causative verbs. In Rappaport Hovav, Malka & Doron, Edith & Sichel, Ivy (eds.), *Lexical semantics, syntax, and event structure*. 177-203. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Author. 2017.

Brajerski, Tadeusz.1966. *Język staro-cerkiewno-słowiański*. Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego.

Codex Marianus. (http://www.helsinki.fi/slaavilaiset/ccmh/) (Accessed 2015-12-12).

Corpus PROIEL. (http://www.tekstlab.uio.no:3000/users/sign_in) (Accessed 2015-12-12).

Kemmer, Suzanne.1993. *The middle voice*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Lunt, Horace G. 2001. *Old Church Slavonic grammar*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Madariaga, Nerea. 2010. The development of Indo-European middle-passive verbs, a case study in Ancient Greek and Old Church Slavonic. *Indogermanische Forschungen. Zeitschrift für Indogermanistik und allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft* 115. 149-178.