

TRANSFORMED REFLEXIVE VERBAL FRAMES IN A FRENCH-SLOVAK CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE

^aLUCIA RÁČKOVÁ, ^bKATARÍNA CHOVANCOVÁ

Matej Bel University, Tajovského 40, 974 01 Banská Bystrica, Slovakia

email: ^alucia.rackova@yahoo.com,

^bkatarina.chovancova@umb.sk

Abstract: The paper presents results of a contrastive study of transformed reflexive verbal frames in Slovak and in French. It is a continuation of the research on verbal valency, in terms of collocability of predicates and their complements, of Slovak full verbs and their French semantic equivalents. Authors point out at interrelations between reflexivity and other verbal properties such as impersonal character of the utterance. Knowledge of these binds can be a facilitating factor in communication and acquisition.

Keywords: linguistics, grammar, verb, Slovak, French.

1 Introduction

Verbal valency frames belong to the phenomena in which systemic differences between typologically different languages such as French and Slovak can be observed with clarity. The verbal valency is closely bound to some semantic and syntactic properties of verbs, namely personal or impersonal nature of the verb and presence or absence of reflexivity. These features are particularly important in the study of certain types of verbal constructions and are related to the question of syntactical complexity of the sentence.

Slavic languages (among them Slovak language) are characterized by a certain number of specific features that distinguish them from other linguistic groups (e.g. Romance languages or Germanic languages). The presence of verbal flexion leads to the existence of several sentence types that do not have perfect formal counterparts in languages belonging to the above stated groups. The paper is a case analysis of two structures of this kind. To do so, attention will be put, in the first place, to theoretical description of syntactic realities of Slovak language. In the second step, authentic corpus material will be described and analyzed. Finally, results of the analysis will be discussed and conclusive remarks will be gathered.

2 Theoretical framework

In Slovak, each verb is either reflexive or non reflexive. Reflexivity is a formal feature of verbs which take up *sa* or *si* component. According to the morphosyntactic value of *sa* / *si*, three cases appear:

1. *Sa* / *si* is a lexical morpheme, an integral part of the verbal form (e. g. *smiat' sa* – ríre / to laugh; *všimat' si* – noter / to note, to observe). These are reflexive verbs.
2. *Sa* / *si* is a reflexive pronoun and enters the verbal clause (*holit' sa* – se raser / to shave; *verit' si* – avoir confiance en soi / to have confidence in oneself). It is the reflexive variant of non reflexive verbs.
3. *Sa* / *si* is a grammatical morpheme and marks the specific value of the verbal form in a construction of a certain type, e. g. *hovori sa* – on dit / they say (literally it is said); *robilo sa* – on faisait / it was being done. These are reflexive forms of non reflexive verbs. (Ružička et al. 1966 : 376).

Without the obligatory presence of *sa* / *si* component in the whole paradigm, reflexive verbs would be viewed as incomplete, incorrect or semantically modified. The lexical morpheme *sa* / *si* has no direct semantic influence on the verb as such, e. g. *narodit' sa* – naître / to be born (Ružička 1966 : 377-378). Within the group of reflexive verbs, there are reflexive verbs without non reflexive variants, e. g. *smiat' sa*, *všimat' si* and reflexive verbs with non reflexive variants (derived reflexive verbs), e. g. *volat' sa* – *volat'* (s' appeler – appeler / to be called (somehow) – to call).

A certain number of non reflexive verbs have reflexive variants. The reflexive variant is present in the whole paradigm of the non reflexive verb. *Sa* / *si* is an accusative (*sa*) or a dative (*si*) pronoun expressing the identity of the agent (Ružička 1966 : 384). The valency of the reflexive variant is the same as the valency of the non reflexive verb it belongs to. Thus, a transitive verb stays transitive: *umývat' niekoho, niečo* – *umývat' sa/seba* (laver – se laver / to wash – to wash oneself; *pomáhat' niekomu* – *pomáhat' si/sebe* (aider – s' aider / to help – to help oneself).

Non reflexive verbs sometimes take reflexive forms. In this case, *sa* is a morphological morpheme and does not have a pronominal value. *Si* cannot appear here. Reflexive constructions are used to form simple or composed predicative forms in order to resolve conflicts between the verbal construction and the semantic valency value (intencná hodnota¹) of the verb (Ružička et al., 1966 : 387). Among reflexive forms of non reflexive verbs, there is a) passive reflexive form (pasívny zvrtný tvar) and b) impersonal reflexive form (neosobný zvrtný tvar).

If the reflexive form appears in a noun-verb predicative clause the grammatical subject of the sentence is the object of the verbal action (the patient) and not its actor (the agent) as it might have been expected from semantic valency of the verb. However, the semantic valency of the verb remains unchanged, e. g. *Reči sa hovoria a chlieb sa je.* (Les paroles se disent et le pain se mange. / Words are spoken, the bread is eaten. – Slovak proverb). In this case, the reflexive form has a passive value and it is synonymous with composed passive form. It is possible to interchange the two, e. g. *styk sa obmedzil* (le contact s'est limité) = *styk bol obmedzený* (le contact a été limité). However, the passive reflexive form is limited to the 3rd person both singular and plural of personal transitive action verbs. The subject of the passive reflexive form is non-animated. The logical subject is rarely expressed.

The impersonal reflexive form of non reflexive verbs is used to resolve the conflict between the construction of the „one-constituent“ sentence and the presence of a personal verb without changing its semantic valency. (Ružička 1966 : 388). The logical subject of the sentence is either implicite or expressed by a dependent case. The impersonal reflexive form is available for all reflexive verbs, excluding transitive verbs with explicit object and auxiliary verbs.

According to Oravec, Bajžíková et Furdík (1986 : 130), semantic valency of verbs can be modified by elimination of constituents or by the presence of reflexive marker *sa*. *Sa* act as a reflexive pronoun with verbs expressing conscient and actual action (and not an inconscient or usual one), e. g. *obliekat' sa* (s'habiller / to dress, to put on some clothes). For these verbs, *sa* does nothing more than redirect the action towards the subject. Elsewhere, it is a mean to diminish the complexity of the semantic valency of the verb. The reflexive *sa* limits verbal construction simplifying it on the right and making verbs change their semantic valency. The reflexive *sa* limits the verbal construction on its left neutralising actional relations of personal verbs to their agents. In this way, impersonal reflexive form is created. *Sa* has a deagenting function, exposing the agent from its usual position.

Ružička (1960a) deals with the role of impersonal verbs in the grammatical system of Slovak. He suggests that, in Slovak, impersonal verbs create a particular sentence type. The complexity of the sentence is based on the difference between personal and impersonal verbs. Among „one-constituent“ sentences, „no subject“ sentences are defined, i. e. those in which the logical subject is moved from the position of the

¹ The term *intencná hodnota* is linked to the theory of semantic valency (*slovesná intencia*) as a grammatical category of verbs (Paulíny 1943; Ružička 1960a,b, 1961, 1966; Kačala 1989; Sokolová 1995).

grammatical subject to another position within the sentence., Let us observe two different ways of expressing the same action in the following example: *chlapec zíva – chlapcovi sa zíva* (fr. le garçon baille – *cela baille au garçon / eng. the boy is yawning – *it is yawning to the boy) (Ružička, 1960 : 6).

Among one-constituent sentences, verbal sentences have a special place thanks to their grammatical features. The basis of their construction is a finite verb in 3rd person singular and neuter (Ružička 1960 : 6), ex. *prší – il pleut*/it rains, it is raining; *snežilo – il a neigé*/it has snowed; *bolo by sa robilo – cela aurait été fait* / it would have been being done². This verbal form has no personal meaning, as it can never take up a nominative neuter personal pronoun *ono* (cela / it). This grammatical feature is present in all verbal one-constituent sentences, not only those containing impersonal verb, but also those containing a personal verb used impersonally (*zabílo ho – cela l'a tué* / it killed him; *duje – il vente* / it (the wind) is blowing) and those containing impersonal reflexive form of personal verbs (*zíva sa mi – je baille* / I am yawning; *sedí sa mi dobre – je me trouve bien* à être assis, je suis assis confortablement / I sit well, *it sits well (to me); *ide sa – on y va* / let us go, there we go) (Ružička 1960 : 6-7). „No-subject“ verbal form is a matter of morphology and syntax. The needs of some syntactical constructions make the verb let aside a component of its signification, especially if this component is a secondary one. That is the case of person for verbs. (Ružička 1960 : 7).

Changes to semantic valency or other particular ways of use of verbs lead necessarily, according to Ružička (1960 : 21) to modifications in the expression of the logical subject and result in sentences with general or indefinite subject. General (or indefinite) logical subject or logical object is the one that remains implicite, but is not expressed by a noun neither by a personal/demonstrative pronoun.

Speaking of verbal structures described so far, as well as other similar structures, Ivanová et al. (2014) use the term „transformed verbal structures“ (slov. transformáty):

- A. Transformed reflexive structures (slov. reflexívne transformáty) resulting from deagentisation and passivation. Among them, the reflexive passive (slov. zvrtné pasívum, marked as structure 1a) and no-subject reflexive form (slov. bezpodmetový zvrtný tvar, 1b).
- B. Structures with a reflexive disposition (slov. dispozičné reflexívne konštrukcie), either personal (with or without object), if the verb is transitive (1c) or impersonal (1d), if the verb is intransitive.
- C. Participial transformed structures (slov. participiálne transformáty), resulting from the processes of passivation and deagentisation. Among them participial passive (slov. participiálne pasívum, 2a) and a marked no-subject participial form (slov. príznakový bezpodmetový participiálny tvar, 2b)
- D. Resultative non-possessive structures with a link verb (slov. neposessívne rezultatívne konštrukcie so sponou, 3a) and resultative possessive structures with the link verb byť (slov. posessívne rezultatívne konštrukcie so sponou mať, 3b).
- E. Nominalised participle (slov. nominalizované participium), standing between verbs and nouns. This form has kept its valency, but took up the passive or resultative features.

The theoretical approach of Ivanová et al. (2014) was later adopted by Zázrivcová et al. (2016) to study Slovak and French verbal structures in a contrastive perspective.

3 Material and methods

The study focuses on a specimen of 3 Slovak personal verbs and their French equivalents: *tvrdiť* (fr. *affirmer* / eng. to claim), *čakať* (fr. *attendre* / eng. to wait) et *nájsť* (fr. *trouver* / eng. to find). These verbs are randomly selected among 15 most frequent Slovak verbs in the contrastive Slovak-French study of verbal valency frames conducted by Zázrivcová et al. (2016)³. According to the methodology used by Zázrivcová, first of all, different meanings of each Slovak verb were identified and their definitions (semantic descriptions), valency schemes and synonyms were described. These descriptions were compliant with those presented in Ivanová et al (2014). Secondly, French equivalents were identified for every meaning of each Slovak verb. The equivalence was established by comparing semantic valency structures of the Slovak and the French verb. Exemplification of valency structures is authentic, constructed on the basis of the working corpus sme2011. Examples of occurrences of French equivalents are taken up from *lemonde0.3* corpus.

Leaning on Zázrivcová findings, we observed similarities and differences between Slovak and French verbs in order to establish a degree of their equivalence. The following scale is designed to assess equivalence of valency structures :

- 1 – total functional identity of valency and non valency constituents
- 2 – total functional identity of valency constituents
- 3 – partial functional identity of valency constituents
- 4 – zero functional identity of valency constituents

The scale has been tested with basic valency structures (Chovancová, Ráčková, Veselá, Zázrivcová, 2017). However, it has not yet been applied to transformed valency structures.

This study focuses on analyzing the presence of transformed valency structures 1a and 1b, i. e. reflexive passive and „no-subject“ reflexive form (as defined by Ružička 1960a, 1960b, 1966; Oravec, Bajzíkova and Furdík 1986 and Ivanová et al. 2014) in a specimen of Slovak-French verbal valency contrastive corpus. The objective is to identify potentially equivalent French verbal valency structures and to look at their degree of equivalence. According to the hypothesis, a) The dominant equivalent French structure of Slovak reflexive transformed structures 1a and 1b is the *on* structure; b) In the formal perspective, the *on* structure in French is supposedly partially equivalent to no-subject reflexive form in Slovak.

4 Data analysis

For each of the 3 analyzed verbs, the attention focuses on the presence of transformed structures 1a and 1b. These structures are presented in the tables below, with semantically equivalent structures in French. Semantic equivalency is based on comparison (identity) of meaning descriptions of Slovak and French verbs proposed in referential lexicographic resources for each of the two languages. The tables below demonstrate partial formal equivalences and, at the same time, total functional equivalences, between structures in the two languages. (Syntactic constituents entering the schemes are designed according to Zázrivcová et al. 2016: Slog – logical subject, Sn – a noun in nominative case in Slovak, VVže – subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction *že* in Slovak, Sd – a dative noun in Slovak, o SI – a noun in prepositional local case introduced by the preposition *o* in Slovak, VVkor – a subordinate clause corresponding to the nominal constituent in the same role, S_{COD} – a direct object noun in French, INF – an infinitive, PSque – a subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction *que* in French, PRON_{pers, ind} – a personal indefinite pronoun *on* in French, VF – a finite verb etc.).

² French and English translations in this part, proposed by authors, are approximative, sometimes literal. They should be used to facilitate the understanding meanings of Slovak examples, still bearing in mind that syntactic patterns commented and exemplified are fundamentally different in Slovak and in French and/or English language.

³ The selection was based on frequency list generated from monolingual specialized corpus sme2011, part of written corpora of Slovak National Corpus.

Tab. 1. Correspondences of transformed structures of the verb *tvrdiť* I and its French equivalents⁴.

V-SL	N°	Valency pattern in Slovak	Valency pattern in French	V-FR
tvrdiť I	1a	[Slog: S _n /VV _{žc}] – VF _{refl pas} – (o S _l)	PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – S _{COD} /INF/PS _{qu}	affirmer
			PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – S _{COD} /INF/PS _{qu}	prétendre
			PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – S _{COD} /INF/PS _{qu}	avancer

The imperfective verb *tvrdiť* I meaning "hovoriť ako isté" (fr. dire comme vrai / en. claim st true)⁵ receives a series of 5 French equivalents (*affirmer*, *assurer*, *avancer*, *prétendre* and *soutenir*). The transformed structure 1a is attested, in *lemonde0.3*, for three of them (*affirmer*, *avancer* and *prétendre*):

- (1) Pritom sa tvrdí, že vaše vrcholné dielo ešte len príde.
- (2) Cela fait vingt ans qu'on affirme qu'il faut baisser les coûts du travail pour augmenter la part des investissements.
- (3) Xavier Musca est sans doute à l'Élysée le plus persuadé que l'Europe est au bord du gouffre. Et s'empporte lorsqu'on prétend que Nicolas Sarkozy met en scène la crise à des fins politiciennes.
- (4) Pour le ministère de l'écologie, il s'agit d'un texte équilibré. S'agissant de la disparition de la mention des condamnations des entreprises, on avance une „impossibilité juridique, la Chancellerie étant opposée à ce qui relèverait de la violation du casier judiciaire“.

In all the three cases, French valency schemes contain less constituents on the right than the Slovak one. In other terms, French verbs can be seen as bivalent (COD is the only constituent present on the right) while the Slovak can be considered as trivalent (two prepositional nominal constituents are potentially present on the right). On the left, indefinite personal pronoun *on* can be found in French and a vacant position is observed in Slovak, the logical subject (marked in [...]) has been displaced to the right.

For the imperfective verb *čakať* I with perfective variants *počkať*/*dočkať*, as well as for the imperfective verb *čakať* II with no perfective variant, the basic correspondences of transformed structures are shown in the tables 2 and 3. Different meanings of the same verb are designed by numbers, e. g. *čakať* I-1 means "zotrvať v pokoji na istom mieste" (fr. rester en un lieu, eng. stay in the same place), *čakať* I-2 means "zotrvať za určitým cieľom" (fr. espérer la survenance de quelque chose, eng. wait for something to happen) and *čakať* I-3 means "predpokladať, že sa niečo stane" (fr. rester en un lieu, l'attention étant fixée sur quelque chose qui doit survenir; eng. expect something to happen).

For each of the three meanings of *čakať* I, 1b structure are observed in *sme2011*. The absence of the subject on the left is noticed, as well as the presence of a reflexive verbal form. In French, the position on the left of the verb is occupied by the pronoun *on* and the verb does not take a reflexive form. For *čakať* I-1, the right side of the verb is perfectly equivalent in Slovak and in French. For *čakať* I-2 and *čakať* I-3, there is a crucial difference on the right, concerning the syntactic nature of the nominal constituent (a COD in French, a COI in Slovak). This makes the degree of equivalence fall to 3.

⁴ V-SL – Slovak verb, N° - type of the transformed structure (1a or 1b), V-FR – French verb equivalent to the Slovak verb.

⁵ The homonymous imperfective verb *tvrdiť* II meaning "robiť tvrdým, tvrdším" (fr. rendre ferme / en. make st harder) is semantically equivalent to French verbs *affirmer* or *durcir*. The only transformed structure found in *sme2011* and *lemonde0.3* corpora was 4a for both languages, with the degree of equivalence 1.

Tab. 2. Correspondences of transformed structures of the verb *čakať* I (*čakať* / *počkať*, *dočkať*) and its French equivalent *attendre*.

V-SK	N°	Valency pattern in Slovak	Valency pattern in French
I-1	1b	VF _{refl, imp} – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}	PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}
I-2	1b	VF _{refl, imp} – na S _a /VV _{kor}	PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – S _{COD}
I-3	1b	VF _{refl, imp} – na S _a /VV _{kým/kedy/čim} /že	PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – S _{COD}

The 3 meaning of the Slovak imperfective verb *čakať* I-1 (ex. 5, 6), I-2 (ex. 7, 8), I-3 (ex. 9, 10) form 1b structure as follows:

- (5) A čaká sa tam do 180 dní.
- (6) Čaká sa len výnimočne.
- (7) Páchatel'ov podvodu zadržali v Česku a čaká sa na ich vydanie na Slovensko.
- (8) Čaká sa na nové prepočty.
- (9) [...] čakalo sa na vypadnutie Zdena Cháru alebo Andreja Meszároša v play-off NHL.
- (10) Momentálne ministerstvo zmeny nechystá, čaká sa na koalíčnú dohodu.

The same 1b structure is attested for the 3 corresponding meanings of the French verb *attendre* (*attendre1* – ex. 11, 12; *attendre2* – ex. 13, 14; *attendre3* – ex. 15, 16):

- (11) À Benghazi, au quartier général politique des rebelles, on attend.
- (12) Des mois qu'on attendait, et on allait voir ce qu'on allait voir, lundi 10 octobre, avec la diffusion des deux premiers épisodes.
- (13) Dans le centre, on attendait l'eau comme un ennemi invisible, probable mais lent à dévoiler sa menace.
- (14) Or, pendant les quatre ans qu'elle a passés à Bercy, on a peu entendu Mme Lagarde articuler sa vision sur les grands déséquilibres financiers internationaux, sur la politique de change chinoise, ou sûr les contrôles des flux de capitaux – des exemples types des problèmes sur lesquels on attend le chef du FMI.
- (15) Neuf ans qu'on attend le retour de l'acteur Peter Mullan derrière la caméra, pour un essai transformé.
- (16) À la mairie, on attend le procès des „quatre de Debrecen“ avec appréhension, indignant à l'avance de voir Tatarszentgyörgy montré du doigt.

The imperfective *čakať* II with no perfective variant receives, for its third meaning „predpokladať (často neprijemnú) udalosť“ (fr. prévoir, eng. foresee) *attendre* and its reflexive variant *s'attendre* as two semantic equivalents in French:

Tab. 3. Correspondences of transformed structures of the verb *čakať* II (imperf.) and its French equivalent *attendre*.

V-SK	N°	Valency pattern in Slovak	Valency pattern in French	V-FR
II-3	1a	[Slog: S _n /VV _{žc}] – VF _{refl, pas}	S _s – VF _{pas}	attendre

The structure 1a is attested in Slovak (ex. 17) and in French (ex. 18):

- (17) Čaká sa tvrdá debata, ako zmeniť Lisabonskú zmluvu a ktoré krajiny do toho pôjdu.
- (18) Pour le reste, la baisse du déficit est attendue de deux séries de mesures.

The perfective Slovak verb *nájst'* (fr. trouver, eng. to find), opposed to the imperfective form *nachádzať*, is attested with three meanings. For the first two of them, the transformed structure 1a is available.

Tab. 4. Correspondences of transformed structures of the verb *nájst'* and its French equivalent *trouver*.

V-SK	N°	Valency pattern of Slovak	Valency pattern of French
nájst'1	1a	[Slog: S _n] – VF _{refl, pas} – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}	S _n – VF _{refl, pas} – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}
			PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – S _{cod} – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}
nájst'2	1a	[Slog: S _n] – VF _{refl, pas} – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}	PRON _{pers, ind} – VF – ADV _{loc} – ADV _{temp}

For the verb *nájst'1*, "meaning hľadáním alebo mimovoľne objaviť", the following examples of 1a structure can be found:

- (19) Po čase sa originál stratil a našiel sa až v roku 1993 v Barcelone.
 (20) Začiatkom roka sa v Bratislave našla päťstoeurová bankovka.

For the French equivalent *trouver*, with the same meaning, 1a is equally present:

- (21) On n'a pas trouvé de remède à la crise de la famille moderne.
 (22) Dans le fonds de l'ONG Memorial, on a trouvé de nombreuses photos de manifestations.

For *nájst'2*, meaning "hľadáním alebo mimovoľne získať" (ex. 23) and for its French equivalent *trouver*, meaning "se procurer, parvenir à obtenir") we find 1a as follows:

- (23) „Našlo sa tam bližšie nešpecifikované technické zariadenie spôsobilé pravdepodobne na odpočúvanie,“ potvrdila hovorkyňa Slovenskej pošty Bela Lisáková.
 (24) Difficile de nier qu'on trouve dans le parti un camp conservateur, et libéral.

5 Discussion

The central point of the study is the notion of equivalence. Identification of equivalence binds between formal syntactic patterns of verbs as well as between underlying semantic structures is based on the following bases: a) lexicographic treatment of lexical units (semantic equivalence of lexical units and their meanings), b) corpus evidence (proof of record of syntactic structures in use), c) native speaker intuition (confirmation of adequacy of some stylistic and pragmatic values of verbal forms and constructions, or their interchangeability in context), the last of the three bringing along an inevitable dose of subjectivity.

The analysis of transformed syntactic structures 1a and 1b of 3 specimen Slovak verbs reveals the existence of basic formal and functional equivalence patterns. First, reflexive passive structure (1a) with explicit logical subject (Slog) at the right side of the verb (eventually holding variable position within the utterance) in Slovak shows functional equivalence to 3 concurrent French structures, namely reflexive passive structure vs. (standard) passive structure vs. *on* structure. Second, the Slovak „non-subject“ reflexive form is equivalent to the French *on* structure. These relations of equivalence need to be further tested on large-scale verbal valency corpora.

1a)

[Slog: S_n/VV_{že}] – VF_{refl, pas} ----- PRON_{pers, ind} – VF
 [Slog: S_n/VV_{že}] – VF_{refl, pas} ----- S_s – VF_{pas}
 [Slog: S_n] – VF_{refl, pas} ----- S_s – VF_{pas}
 [Slog: S_n] – VF_{refl, pas} ----- S_n – VF_{refl, pas}
 [Slog: S_n] – VF_{refl, pas} ----- PRON_{pers, ind} – VF

2b)

VF_{refl, imp} ----- PRON_{pers, ind} – VF

The parallel between „non-subject“ reflexive form and *on* structure is of particular interest, as it is rarely put forward in contrastive contextualised grammars or in methodology of teaching. Both types of structures are deagentised, i.e. weaken the capacity of the agent to take the subject position. In Slovak and in French, the deagentisation is effectuated through pronominal operators (*sa* in Slovak and *on* in French). Despite different subcategorial belonging of each (*sa* being a reflexive marker and *on* being a personal pronoun), these operators have several common features. Among them, the capacity of introducing a general, indefinable agent. Moreover, both of these markers limit the verbal form, requiring the 3rd person singular or formally equivalent impersonal verb form. Naturally, *sa* and *on* appear in different positions in the syntactic structure. *On* appears on the left side of the verb; *sa* is more mobile within the limits of the valency structure.

More often, French structures with *on* as subject are associated with 1st person plural translational equivalents in Slovak language (placing the personal pronoun *my* /*we*/ in the subject position). This general *we*-perspective is operational in a wide variety of contexts as a functional equivalent of the French *on*. Given this commonly admitted functional equivalence, the question should be asked about potential similarities between *my* and *sa* as markers, of a various kind and various potential, of deagentization.

The concurrence between composed descriptive passive and reflexive passive can be observed in Slovak, as well. It must be noted that the use passive, in general, encounters grammatical and stylistic restrictions in Slovak. Unlike in French, in Slovak the reflexive passive is more frequent than composed passive. It is used to express a usual, repeated action. On the contrary, it cannot be used when it is necessary to express the agent of the verbal action.

Insight into transformed verbal frames leads to another important finding. The equivalence assessment scale taking into account the right side of the valency structure only, used so far to compare basic verbal frames, proves to be insufficient for transformed valency structures. Rethinking a more powerful evaluation tool remains a necessity for further research on the matter.

6 Conclusion

The contrastive Slovak-French study of verbal valency frames shows parallels and differences between transformed verbal structures, focusing on reflexivity and impersonal character. Suppression of syntactic and semantic binds between the agent of the verbal action and the verb itself is assured, in both languages, by operators of pronominal nature. Parallels between these items are seldom highlighted, still they deserve a closer look materialising in larger corpora-based studies.

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