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Causatives and Transitivity

CAUSATIVES AND TRANSITIVITY

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Through the looking-glass, and how causatives look there

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For V.P. Nedjalkov - on the occasion of his 65th birthday

1. Introduction

A usually neglected approach to the typology of verbal categories is the investigation of their relations to other categories. Below we shall try to demonstrate that such an approach can contribute to a reanalysis or an extension of the inventory of categories. Analyzing the asymmetric structure of one of the categories, we have managed to find an interesting class of verbs which seems to fill a gap in the system of verbal categories. The present article deals with this candidate for a new category.

2. Causatives and their asymmetric structure

Nedjalkov and Sil'nickij (1969a: 6) defined causative situation (CS) as a complex situation which consists of two elementary situations (S_i and S_j) connected by the relationship of causation (causal copula=CAUS), as shown in Fig. I (V_i and V_j denote the main verbs of clauses corresponding to the situations S_i and S_j):

(I)
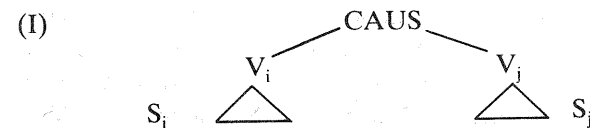
The symmetry of the CS (with regard to the vertical axis) is illusory. In causative sentences the clause denoting S_i is often reduced:

(1)   *We moved the date of the meeting because of John's illness.*

$$S_i \qquad \text{CAUS} \qquad S_j$$
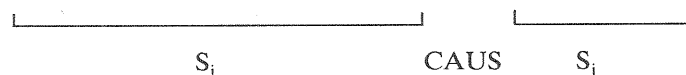
In (1) S_i is "compressed" to an action nominal construction. The near reduction of S_i to zero occurs when only a "trace" of the S_i clause remains, namely, its principal argument. If V_i is not relevant for the speaker, it may be left unspecified, leaving only the Causer:

(2)   *Peter caused us to return.*

Compare Fig. (II) where the reduced clause is not shaded:

(II)
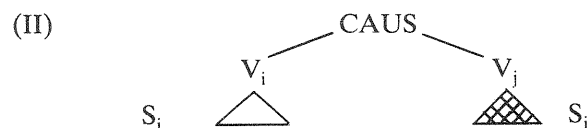
$$\text{CAUS}$$
$$V_i \qquad\qquad V_j$$
$$S_i \qquad\qquad\qquad S_j$$

Many languages have regular devices for expressing a CS reduced in this way. When the causative copula is expressed by means of a separate verb (such as Germ. *lassen*, Fr. *faire*, Engl. *make*, *have*, etc.) we have an analytic causative; when it is expressed by a marker in the verb derived from V_j (CAUS-V_j), which becomes the main verb of the clause union, thus dominating the first argument of V_i (Causer), we have a morphological causative (cf. Nedjalkov and Sil'nickij 1969b: 25).

Hence, a language has morphological causatives if it has syntactic constructions in which the semantic representation follows the pattern in (I), under the following conditions:

(i) the meaning of V_i is not specified (and, therefore, the corresponding clause is reduced);

(ii) the main verb of the clause union is CAUS-V_j, a verb derived from V_j (the causative to V_j).

Thus, according to Fig. II and conditions (i-ii), if a causative situation is expressed by a causative construction (below abbreviated as CC), it is represented in an asymmetric way. This fact is well-known[1] and can be easily accounted for, both from formal and common sense perspectives: a cause (reason) and a result are not equal. For the speaker and the listener, the result is usually more important than the cause, implying a sort of linguistic "discrimination" against the cause (cf. Nedjalkov and Sil'nickij 1969a: 7).

3. Causatives and their looking-glass counterparts

Theoretically, it may be assumed that a case opposite to the one just discussed is also possible; namely the cause can turn out to be more important for the speaker than the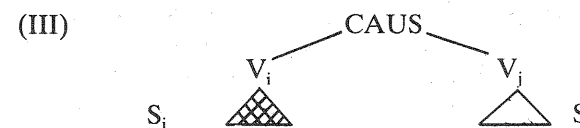 result. If such a situation were expressed in a language, we would get scheme (III), which is in fact a mirror reflection of (II):

(III)

$$\text{CAUS}$$
$$V_i \qquad\qquad V_j$$
$$S_i \qquad\qquad\qquad S_j$$

If we wish to apply this scheme to a natural language, conditions (i-ii) must be reformulated as follows:

(iii) the meaning of V_j is not specified (and, therefore, the corresponding clause is reduced);

(iv) the main verb of the clause union is V_i-CAUS (derived from V_i).

As a matter of fact, these derived verbs (V_i-CAUS) may be considered as a mirror reflection of causatives. The question arises as to whether constructions meeting conditions (iii-iv) are in fact attested in natural languages. Is there a language where we can find these "looking-glass causatives"? If so, how do they look there? Below we shall try to demonstrate that such a category can in fact be identified in at least one language.

We will begin by giving an example of a type of construction which meets only the last condition; this type is attested in the Andoke language of the Tupi-Guarani language family (see Landaburu 1979: 230). In Andoke, the verbal suffix -*kə́séha* signals that the main clause expresses a situation resulting from S_i (in order to distinguish between this and an ordinary causative marker, we gloss it as CAUS'):

(3)   ∧-*o-be-kə́séha b*∧ *o-yi-i*
       -I-eat-CAUS'   I-sick-
      'I ate (V_i-CAUS) and [as a result] I became sick.'

However, here the S_j-clause is not reduced, and so this sentence may not be treated as a mirror reflection of a causative construction.

Next, we proceed to the analysis of constructions that meet conditions (iii-iv). We have identified such constructions in a less "exotic" language, namely in Russian.

Consider the following verbs, which are productively derived by means

of the prefix *do-* and the suffix *-sja* (i.e. by means of the circumfix *do-...
-sja*):

(4)   *rabotat'* 'work' - *dorabotat'sja* (*do obmoroka*) 'work until fainting'

(5)   *podskazyvat'* 'prompt' - *dopodskazyvat'sja* (*do zamečanija učitelja*) 'keep prompting (until the teacher's reprimand)', etc.

This derivational affix is very productive; in colloquial speech it may be combined with any imperfective verb denoting a conscious activity. This class of verbs is of course mentioned in Russian grammars and works on verbal derivation;[2] also, a thorough analysis of this verbal class was recently presented by Mel'čuk (1987). Let us use X, Y to represent noun phrases, and Z to indicate a verb undergoing *do-...-sja*-derivation. Mel'čuk defines construction (6):

(6)   X *do*-Z:PAST-*sja do* Y:GEN

as follows:[3]

(7)   'By excessively performing activity Z, X underwent Y, so that Y is unfavorable for X.'

This definition consists of three components which are relevant for the present study:

(a)   X performs an activity Z;
(b)   performing Z by X implies a consequence Y, i.e. Z causes Y;
(c)   Y is often not specified;[4] it is only known that Y is unfavorable for X.

If we substitute V_i and V_j for Z and Y, respectively, and omit the second part of the component (c), we get a formulation which meets requirements (iii-iv) exactly. Hence, the construction X *do*-Z:PAST-*sja* (without a Y argument) turns out to be almost an exact mirror reflection of typical causative constructions such as those described in (II), so that verbs like *dorabotat'sja* may be considered as counterparts of causatives in the Looking-Glass World.

Before we proceed to a more detailed analysis of these verbs, we need to find a term for this category. As was indicated above, the term "causative" is used for verbs following the pattern CAUS-V_j where V_j indicates a consequence having some (most commonly not expressed in the sentence) cause(s). In a parallel way, a verb V_i-CAUS containing the component V_i which denotes a cause of some (commonly not expressed) event(s), i.e. a cause of some consequence(s) may be referred to as **consecutive**.

4.   On Russian consecutives

4.1   *Verbs in do-...-sja*

A more detailed analysis of consecutives in *do-...-sja* would show that their parallelism to typical causatives is not quite perfect. Below we mention only some of the differences.

As has been mentioned, the causing event S_i can remain absolutely unspecified. As for its counterpart (i.e. the resulting event S_j) in consecutive constructions (below abbreviated as CsC), the speaker provides a little more information about it. In particular, a consecutive construction presupposes that the consequence(s) is/are undesirable for the main participant of S_i. This is true also for the situation when Y is omitted.

Another difference concerns the syntactic structure of the constructions under consideration. Thus, both causative and consecutive constructions are formed by creating a clause union from two (elementary) clauses. In the case of causatives, the most usual trace of the reduced clause is its main argument, i.e. the causer, which becomes the subject of the main predicate (i.e. causative). The underlying predicate (V_i) is usually not expressed, although it can be represented, say, by a gerundial or absolute construction:

(8)   *I broke the window by throwing a ball into it.*

By contrast, in a consecutive sentence the main participant of S_j (if different from the agent of S_i, i.e. if V_j is some conscious activity performed by somebody) remains most commonly unexpressed, whereas V_j can be easily expressed by an action nominal construction (as in (9-10)) or a complement subordinate clause (as in (11-12)):

(9)   *Ja ležal na divane s kakim-to glupym francuzskim romanom i doležalsja do golovnoj boli.*   (Garšin)
       'I lay on the sofa with a silly French novel until I got a headache.'

(10)   *Prijateli **dopilis'** do bespamjatstva.*
       'Friends have drunk until they have lost consciousness.'

(11)   *Ja smotrel [na ee lico]... i **dosmotrelsja** do togo, čto tjagostnyje mysli načali brodit' v moej golove.*   (Družinin)
       'I looked [at her face] so long that painful thoughts started crowding in my mind.'

(12) *Mamen'ka [...] doxozjajničalas', nakonec, do togo, čto, nakonec,*
     rešitel'no ne znaet, čto delat'.   (Gogol')
     'Mother has kept house so zealously that she does not finally
     know what to do now.'

This observation demonstrates clearly that the degree of "discrimina-
tion" of the consequence in CsC does not reach the degree of "discrimina-
tion" of the cause in CC.[5]

To conclude this section, we would like to touch upon one of the syn-
tactic peculiarities of *do-...-sja* constructions. The case-marking pattern of
verbs in *do-...-sja* is described by Mel'čuk (1987) in a rather detailed way
(cf. also Rojzenzon 1959: 29-31); nevertheless, some corrections seem to
be in order. In particular, the statement by Mel'čuk (1987: 637) that a verb
in *do-...-sja* loses all the valencies (with the exception of the first one) of its
non-derived counterpart (Z) appears to be too categorical. These argu-
ments do in fact show a tendency not to be expressed overtly, but still, if the
consecutive verb dominates a noun phrase denoting a consequence (*do*
Y:GEN), these valencies can be, in a way, restored:

(14) *on zanimalsja matematikoj*
     'He did mathematics.'

(15) **on   dozanimalsja   matematikoj*
     he:NOM *do*:CONS:PAST   mathematics:INSTR

(15) is ungrammatical because of the instrumental NP; only *on
dozanimalsja* is possible. However, a sentence where a '*do* Y:GEN' NP
occurs seems to be much more acceptable:

(16) *on dozanimalsja matematikoj do golovnoj boli*
     'He did his mathematics until he got a headache.'

So, some of the valencies inherited from Z are still possible, though being
inseparable[6] from the *do* Y:GEN valency.[7]

4.2 *Other candidates for consecutives in Russian*

Verbs in *do-...-sja* can form one more type of construction containing an
additional argument, namely:

(17) X *u* W:GEN *do*+Z+*sja do* Y:GEN

Cf.:

(18) *On u Petrova dotrenirujetsja do bol'nicy*
     'He will be coached by Petrov until he'll get into a hospital.'

Similar constructions can be formed by verbs not belonging to the *do-...-
sja*-class, too:

(19) X *u* W:GEN Z

Cf.:

(20) *Petr u novogo načal'nika pokurit v rabočee vremja!*
     'If Peter smokes during his working hours, the new boss will
     punish him [somehow].'

(21) – *Pročitaj pis'mo na lekcii Sokolova!*
     – *U nego pročitaješ'!*
     – 'Read the letter at Sokolov's lesson!'
     – 'He won't give me any chance!'

It should be emphasized that it is always the main verb that bears the
phrasal accent: in constructions like (20) the sentence on the whole has a
special phrasal intonation (one of irony, often combined with threat). As
can be seen, sentences following the pattern in (19) express a causative situ-
ation without specifying a resulting event. Thus, according to the defini-
tions suggested above, they may be treated as consecutives. However, since
the circumfix *do-...-sja* in the main verb is optional,[8] one may state that the
function of a consecutive marker is performed by a specific sentence intona-
tion.

The following sentence type may be considered as a transformation of
(19):

(22) W X:DAT Z (with the same intonation as (19))

Cf.:

(23) *On tebe pokurit v rabočee vremja!*
     'He'll [somehow] punish you, if you smoke during your working
     hours.'

Both (19) and (22) are especially common in colloquial speech.

It is worth mentioning that in these constructions the main participant
of S (denoted by W) can also be expressed. It may be referred to as
"executor" because S is always undesirable for X, often being a kind of
punishment.

4.3 Verbs with the prefix za-

Let us consider the following construction:

(24) A za-Z X:ACC (do Y:GEN).

Cf.:

(25) On zagonjal lošad' (do smerti)
       'He rode the horse to death.'

The class of verbs which can be substituted for Z in this pattern includes imperfective transitive verbs denoting various kinds of physical coercion crucially involving the object in the action.[9] This construction[10] also serves to denote the performance of an activity that results in some consequence undesirable for X. The result of a causing event S_j denoted by za-verbs is most commonly 'putting X out of action, death, breakage, detriment and so on', cf.: mučit' 'torture' - zamučit' 'wear out, torture to death', gnat' 'urge on' - zagnat' 'ride to death', čitat' 'read' - začitat' (do dyr) 'read a book to tatters', etc. This derivational pattern is productive in colloquial speech, as well. In contrast to do-...-sja-consecutives, an agentive participant of S_i, non-identical with X (the real causer of S_j), is expressed in these constructions.

5. Consecutives and some adjacent categories

We will now turn to the problems of distinguishing consecutives from other categories which are similar to the consecutive verbs in some ways.

5.1 Consecutives and Aktionsarten

There is no doubt that some of the Russian consecutives are closely related to the system of the so-called Aktionsarten ("modes of action"), which is well elaborated in Russian as well as in other Slavic languages. In particular, in most studies dealing with Russian aspectual categories, do-...-sja-verbs are treated as one of the Aktionsarten, referred to as a "special-resultative Aktionsart with a nuance of excessivity of the action' (special'no-rezul'tativnyj s ottenkom črezmernosti dejstvija, Maslov 1965:76) or as "final-negative" (final'no-otricatel'nyj, Šeljakin 1983:190). In fact, do-...-sja-verbs appear to be quite similar to those Aktionsarten which denote an excessive (or simply intensive) performance of an action, cf. naest'sja 'have

eaten enough', pererabotat' 'work too much', etc.

The question arises as to whether there is any important difference between these Aktionsarten and do-...-sja-verbs. Can these Aktionsarten also be treated as consecutives?

5.2 Consecutives and perfect

Another category which seems to be a candidate for inclusion in the consecutive category is perfect. As shown by Maslov (1988: 64-65), the term "perfect" is applied to those verb forms whose meaning "includes two temporal planes: that of precedence, and that of sequence. The situations corresponding to these planes are in some way related as cause and effect." Forms emphasizing the sequence are usually termed "statal perfect", or "resultative" (as in Nedjalkov 1988), whereas those emphasizing the preceding plane, i.e. the cause, are called "actional perfect". The latter type seems to meet conditions (iii-iv) formulated above; that is, it describes a causative situation while reducing the resulting event. A question arises as to whether perfect may be treated as a kind of consecutive.

5.3 Some relevant criteria for discerning consecutives from other categories

In this section we shall try to answer the questions formulated in the previous sections (5.1-2).

In order to distinguish do-...-sja-verbs from the above-mentioned Aktionsarten as well as from the perfect, a semantic criterion can be used. A semantic feature shared by both perfect and some Aktionsarten (satives, saturatives, etc.) is the following one: although these categories denote causal chains of events, the resulting event (S_j) can be easily predicted from the causing event (S_i). In case of perfect S_j is the most ordinary (trivial) result of S_i (e.g. if S_i = 'to read a book', S_j = 'the book is read'; if S_i = 'to build a house', S_j = 'the house is built; exists'; etc.). In case of sat(urat)ive verbs like na-kupat'-sja, na-begat'-sja, etc., S_j may be described as saturation resulting from an excessive (or abundant) performance of the action denoted by V_i. As for consecutives, although the set of possible results is rather limited (various annoyances for X) S_j is not trivial and cannot be unambiguously predicted on the basis of S_i (if not expressed by a prepositional phrase with do).

Thus, one of the important criteria for determining consecutives may be formulated as follows:

the resulting event is non-trivial and cannot be predicted exactly only on the basis of information about S_i.

The importance of the Criterion of Unpredictability can be seen from the fact that it can be used as well for distinguishing causatives from resultatives. Resultatives also denote a causative situation without specifying the cause of the resulting event (see above). However, the character of the cause is quite evident, being, in a way, incorporated in the meaning of resultative: the fact that *the house is built* (resultative) implies that somebody built the house, the fact that *the door is opened* implies that somebody has opened it, etc. Similarly, the perfect meaning incorporates some information about the resulting event, so that a sentence like *John has bought a car* lets us conclude that *John is a possessor of a car now*. Consecutives and causatives, as opposed to perfect and resultative verbal forms, respectively, give much less information about the consequence/result of a member of the causative situation (although it would be an exaggeration to state that no relevant information at all can be deduced).[11]

So, perfect and resultative share the following interesting semantic feature: they both denote a causative situation without expressing any non-trivial result or cause.[12] This is why perfect and resultative can be regarded as "degenerate" consecutive and causative, respectively.

This discussion on the various categories that denote a causative situation but differ in the degree of reduction and/or triviality of either cause or result is summarized in Table 1. The following degrees of reduction of expression of an event seem to be relevant for this preliminary presentation:

+	[+]	
obligatorily	usually	
expressed	expressed	non-expressed
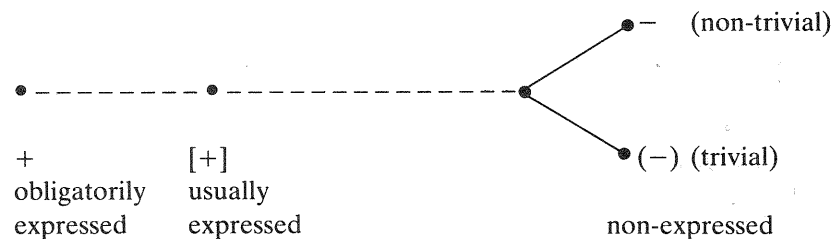
A table representing the basic asymmetric combinations of these features would look as follows:

Table 1

	causing event	caused event	verb type
result-oriented categories	[+]	+	causatives as in Nivkh (fn.5)
	--	+	ordinary causatives
	(−)	+	resultatives
cause-oriented categories	+	[+]	verbs in -kə̂séha in Andoke
	+	−	consecutives
	+	(−)	perfect

Another criterion for distinguishing between consecutives and adjacent categories is based on syntactic changes which an initial clause undergoes through consecutivization. The main verb is subordinated to the predicate CAUSE, and a new argument appears in the sentence, namely Sequence. As we mentioned above, this argument is most commonly optional, however, it becomes obligatory with imperfective *do-...-sja*-verbs; cf. the following incorrect sentence:

(26)   **on dotrenirovyvalsja*
      he train:CONS:IMPFV:PAST

This example becomes correct, only if the Sequence is expressed:

(27)   *on [neskol'ko raz] dotrenirovyvalsja do travmy*
      '[several times] he trained until he got a trauma'

This is not the only modification of the syntactic structure which accompanies consecutivization. As indicated above (Sec.4.1), the Sequence valency interacts in a rather complicated way with the inherited valencies of the initial (non-consecutive) verb (roughly speaking, they are prohibited if the Sequence is omitted).

Thus, consecutivization presupposes a considerable rearrangement of the syntactic structure, in some respects similar to causativization (which also provides a new valency) or other kinds of syntactic derivation. On the other hand, most of the Aktionsarten mentioned in 5.1 as well as perfect do not so crucially influence the syntactic properties of the underlying verb.

6. Some parameters for a typological classification of consecutives

6.1 *Semantics*

Both *do-...-sja*-verbs and *za*-verbs denote an event (S_i) that causes a negative result, i.e. something undesirable for the main participant of S_i. Therefore, these verbs may be called "maleconsecutives". It is quite probable that in some languages "beneconsecutives" occur.

6.2 *Diathesis types*

At least the following two types can be distinguished as to whether the subject of the resulting event S_j is coreferential with either subject or object of the causing event S_i.

In the former case, the term "subject consecutive" may be used. Thus, *do-...-sja*-verbs are subject consecutives:

(28) *Petr dokurilsja do golovnoj boli.*
=[Peter smoked much] CAUS [Peter got headache]

On the other hand, if S_j-subject is coreferential with the S_i-object, the term "object consecutive" can be used, as in the case of Russian *za*-verbs:

(29) *Petr zagnal lošad' do smerti*
=[Peter overdrove the horse] CAUS [the horse died].

7. Conclusion

Our goal in this paper has been to simply sketch some of the relevant parameters in the description of consecutives. A more detailed typological study of consecutives should be based on data from at least a number of languages. In fact, *do-...-sja* -consecutives similar to the Russian type occur in some other Slavic languages, for instance, in Ukrainian (Il'ïn 1953: 47) and in Polish (Puškar 1963: 32-33).[13]

Unfortunately, we have not had the opportunity to study examples of consecutives in other languages. We hypothesize that consecutives may be found in other languages, especially in those languages that have a complicated system of Aktionsarten. The present paper can be considered as a request for typologically relevant data. We would be greatly obliged if typologists and experts in various languages would provide us with exam-

ples of morphological (synthetic) or periphrastic consecutives from the languages of their competence.

NOTES

1. It is noted, for instance, by Talmy (1976), who indicates that S_i appears in a causative sentence as a ground whereas S_j is a figure.

2. See, for instance, Isačenko (1960: 250; Švedova et al. 1980: 386); Znamenskaja (1958: 17-19); Golovin (1959: 145-146); Bogusławski (1963: 73); Rudolfová (1973: 24-25); etc. These verbs are dealt with in a paper by Rojzenzon (1959) containing many interesting and insightful observations. See also a recent monograph by Janda (1986: 181-188).

3. To simplify the formula, we do not touch upon the problem of distinguishing between the presuppositional and assertive components of the definition.

4. It is worth noting that the argument referred to as *do* Y:GEN is most commonly optional. Only with imperfective *do-...-sja*-verbs is it obligatory (see Mel'čuk 1987; Rudolfová 1973: 25).

5. It should be mentioned that not all languages display the same degree of reduction of the causing event. For instance, as has been indicated in the sketch on Nivkh (Gilyak) causatives by Nedjalkov, Otaina, and Xolodovič (1969: 186; Engl. translation 1988: 33), the Nivkh morphological causative in *-gu-* is usually accompanied by a phrase indicating the means of causation, as in the following example:

    if, p'lark   krasir,   vəlvələ-gu-d'
    he his shirt   dye:GER   be black-CAUS-FIN
    'By dyeing his shirt, he made (it) black.'

    In tnis respect, the Nivkh CC's appear to be a more exact "looking-glass copy" of Russian CsC's.

6. We use this term in the sense of Apresjan (1974: 152).

7. We have mentioned only one problem concerned with a full lexicographic description of Russian consecutives in *do-...-sja*. A more detailed analysis of other problems, such as the transformations of syntactic properties of the underlying verb Z and the lexicalization of some *do-...-sja*-verbs (cf. *doigrat'sja* 'to get into trouble', lit. 'play:CONS'; *doprygat'sja* 'id.', lit. 'jump:CONS'; etc.) could be the subject of a separate investigation.

8. Incidentally, verbs with the prefix *po-* are very common in such sentences. The future tense seems to be most appropriate for these constructions (although the past tense is also possible).

9. It should be stressed that not all imperfective transitives may occur in this construction; for instance, it is impossible for verbs denoting a process of creation such as *stroit'* 'build'.

10. See Švedova et al. (eds.) (1980: 360); Golovin (1964: 56-57); Janda (1986: 103-112).

11. In particular, consecutives in *do-...-sja* incorporate the meaning 'S is unfavorable' whereas causatives may contain some information about the character of causation and, hence, about the causing event. Cf. the opposition of direct (= causation by direct man-

ipulation) and indirect (= causation by asking, persuasion, etc.) causatives; factitives vs. permissives; etc.

12.   For the notion of triviality, see Kozinskij (1988: 499).

13.   However, this category is not attested in all Slavic languages: there are no consecutives in Czech, Slovak, etc.

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