A New Grammatical Category: Impulsatives*

MaryEllen Cathcart

Penn Linguistics Colloquium, March 2010

1 Introduction

- Many languages exhibit a construction which has a meaning akin to "x feels like Ving", which I will call an impulsative.

- In Albanian, it is composed of the non-active form of the verb and a dative argument.

  (1) *Agimit   kërcehet   në zyrë.*
       Agim.dat dance.3.s.nonact.pres in office.s.def
       'Agim feels like dancing in the office.' [1]

- In contrast, in Finnish it is composed of an argument with partitive case and a verb with passive morpheme, which is homophonous with the causative morpheme.

  (2) *Jussia   laulattaa*
       Jussi.part sing.pass.3sg
       'Jussi feels like singing.'

- These have been previously analyzed separately.

  - The Albanian construction is also known as the Involuntary State Construction and Kallulli (2006) analyzes these constructions as states.
  - On the other hand, the Finnish construction is analyzed by Pylkkänen (1999) as a causative construction and is called Causative Desiderative.

- While on the surface these constructions appear quite different, and hence have led to very disparate accounts, when analyzed in conjunction these constructions reveal surprising results.

1.1 Roadmap

- First, I will review previous analyses.

- Then I will demonstrate how Albanian and Finnish impulsatives are distinct from canonical desideratives and motivate a null impulsative head.

- Next, I will account for the verbal morphology.

- Then, I will present a full analysis.

- Finally, I will conclude that it is important to have a cross-linguistic perspective.

[1]Can also be interpreted as 'There was dancing in the office and it affected Agim (e.g. it was Agim's office.)' All impulsatives in Albanian are ambiguous between the impulsative reading and a distinct affected argument reading which is not limited to non-actives.

2   Previous Analysis

2.1   Albanian (Kallulli, 2006)

- Kallulli provides an account for various functions of non-active morphology.

- She claims that non-active morphology in Albanian is an event type-shifting device, applying to higher events types to yield lower event types.

- There are 3 primitive event types (Pustejovslcy 1991)

    - States: A single event which is evaluated relative to no other event, such as 'know' and 'believe'.
    - Processes: A sequence of identical events identifying the same semantic expression, such as 'run' and 'work'.
    - Transitions: A single event identifying a semantic expression which is evaluated relative to another single event: its opposition, such as 'break' and 'wet'.

- Specifically, when non-active morphology is affixed to an activity verb, it becomes a stative verb.[2]

- This effectively strips the agenthood of the external argument.

- Finally, the dative argument is pragmatically related to the state and is interpreted as 'feel like' or 'in the mood to'.

2.1.1   Impulsatives are not Purely Stative

- However, impulsatives seem to have more event structure than rather than less.

- Impulsatives are bieventive, while statives are not.

    - Statives cannot have two conflicting time adverbs.

    - (3)   *Dje,   Besa   e   dashuron (atë) sot.
            Yesterday, Besa.nom AGR love.3sg. him   today.
            'Yesterday, Besa loved him today.'

    - However, impulsatives can have two time conflicting adverbs.

    - (4)   Dje   më   kërcehej   sot.
            Yesterday, me.dat dance.nonact.past today.
            'Yesterday I felt like dancing today.'

- Furthermore, the notion of agent is still available semantically in Albanian impulsatives.

    - Albanian impulsatives can occur with purpose adverbs which modify the agent of the overt verb.

    - (5)   Më   flihet   qëllimisht.
            me.dat sleep.nact.imp intentionally
   'I feel like sleeping intentionally.'

---

[2]Kallulli mentions that certain verbs cannot appear in an impulsative with perfect aspect. The speakers I consulted did not find the sentences ungrammatical based on aspect. However, there does appear to be selectional restrictions.

2.2   Finnish (Pylkkänen, 1999)

- In contrast to Kallulli, Pylkkänen (1999)'s account assumes a null modal element to derive the impulsative meaning.

- However, she analyzes the passive morpheme as the homophonous causative morpheme.

- She claims the causative morphology introduces a causing event.

  (6)   *Minu-a laula-tta-a   mutt-en   tiedä mikä.*
        I-PAR   sing-CAUSE-3SG but-not.1SG know what.NOM
        'Something makes me feel like singing but I dont know what (makes me feel like singing)'[3]

- She analyzes the partitive argument as an affected argument of CAUSE which is also thematically related to the caused event.

- Furthermore, she proposes that the relationship between the lower participant and the caused event is much like the possessor relation. This is referred to as R in the tree below.

  (7)

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Maija}_1 \\
\text{CAUSE APPL} \quad \text{PRO}_1 \\
\text{R} \quad \text{sing}
\end{array}
$$
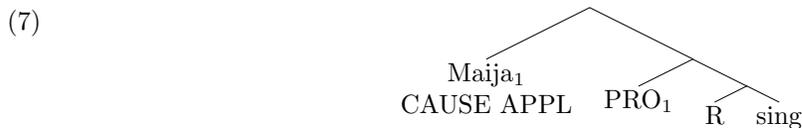
2.2.1   Impulsatives are not Causatives

- Pylkkanen's analysis predicts that all morphologically causative sentences would be ambiguous between the causative and the impulsative meanings.

  (8)   *Jussi   laulatti   Maijaa.*
        Jussi.nom sing.caus.3sg. Maija.part
        'Jussi made Maija sing.'
        *'Jussi caused Maija to feel like singing.'

- Moreover, if there indeed was a causative event present this predicts that impulsatives could be resultatives, however this prediction is not borne out.

  (9)   *Jussi   laulatti   Maijaa   pyorryksiin.*
        Jussi.nom sing.caus.3sg Maija.part dizzy.
        'Jussi made Maija sing dizzy.'

  (10)   **Maijaa   laulatii   pyorroksiin.*
         Maija.part sing.pass.3sg. dizzy.
         'Maija is caused to feel like singing dizzy.'

- Furthermore, if a causative event is present, it should be able to be negated, however it cannot.

  (11)   **Maijaa   ei   laulata mutta han halusi   laulaa.*
         Maija.part not.3sg sing.pass but   she want.3sg sing.inf
         'Nothing made Maija feel like singing, but she wanted to sing.'

---

[3]The Finnish speakers I have consulted have given mixed judgements on this data point.

3   A New Category

- Previously, these have been analyzed separately, however, these constructions have some striking similarities.

    - First, both Albanian and Finnish Impulsatives differ from canonical desideratives
    - Secondly, Albanian and Finnish have similar verbal restrictions

3.1   Impulsatives vs. Desideratives

- The constructions in Albanian and Finnish have a distinct form and interpretation from prototypical desideratives.

3.1.1   Prototypical Desideratives

- Japanese Desiderative

    (12)   *Watashi-ga   ne-**ta**-i*
            speaker-NOM sleep-DES-NONPAST
            'I want to sleep.'

- Desideratives semantically are volitional and often translated as 'want' or 'will'.
- Desideratives carry typical subject case.
- Desideratives must appear overtly, either as an affix or a full verb.

3.1.2   Impulsatives

- Semantically

    * Impulsatives differ from desideratives in that impulsatives semantically are not volitional and are often translated as 'feel like'.

- Syntactically

    * Subjects in impulsatives carry experiencer case.

        · In Albanian, experiencer case is dative.

        (13)   *Agimit   vjen   (që) të   kërceja.*
                Agim.dat come.3sg that MOOD dance.1sg
                'I feel like dancing.'

        · In Finnish, experiencer case is partitive.

        (14)   *Pekka-a   rakaste-ta-an.*
                Pekka-PAR love-PASS-AGR
                'Pekka is loved.'

    * Verbs in impulsatives carry morphology that is non-active and do not agree with their subject.

        Albanian

        (15)   *Agimit   dhe Dritanit   kërcehet/*kërcehen.*
                Agim.dat and Dritan.dat dance.3.s.nonact.pres/dance.3pl.nonact.pres
                'Agim and Dritan feels like dancing in the office.'

Finnish

(16)   *Jussia   ja   Maijaa laulattaa/*laulativat*
       Jussi.part and Maijaa sing.pass.3sg/sing.pass.3pl
       'Jussi feels like singing.'

– Morphologically
  * While desideratives must have a dedicated overt element (verb or morpheme) to indicate the desiderative meaning, the impulsative may be cued by a combination of oblique case marking and non-active morphology.

3.2   The Impulsative Head

- I call this category an *impulsative*, from the noun *impulse* (Oxford English Dictionary: "Sudden or involuntary inclination or tendency to act," defintion 3c).

- In both Finnish and Albanian, this impulsative reading is unavailable in unaccusatives.[4]

  Albanian

(17)   *Agim-it   i   vdis-et.*
       Agim.Dat 3S.Dat die-Non-act.Pres.3S
       'Someone died on Agim'
       *'Agim feels like dying.'

  Finnish

(18)   *∗Maijaa   kuolettaa.*
       Maija.PART die.CAUSE.3sg
       'Maija feels like dying. '

- The modality and the selectional restrictions of impulsatives suggest that their is a null impulsative functional head.

- If there were a null impulsative head, this would suggest that impulsatives were bieventive.

  – While the Albanian impulsative is bieventive (4), the Finnish impulsative is not.

(19)   **Tänään Maija-a   laula-tta-a   huomenna*
       Today   Maija-PAR sing-CAUSE-3SG tomorrow.
       'Today Maija felt like singing tomorrow.'

  – However, Finnish adverbs resist modifying the internal events.

  – Causative sentences do not produce adverb ambiguities.

(20)   *Maija   nauratti   Jussia   uudesaan.*
       Maija.nom laugh.caus.pst Jussi.part again
       'Maija made Jussi laugh again.'
       Possible presuppositions:
       Maija got Jussi to laugh before.
       ∗ Someone else getting Jussi to laugh before.
   ∗ Jussi laughing on his own before.

---

[4]Finnish is limited to unergatives, while Albanian is most salient with unergatives but also allows a limited number of consumption verbs.

4   Syntactic Structure

4.1   Embick (2004)

- Embick proposes an account of the morphological syncretism of the non-active voice in Greek and Romance languages in the Distributed Morphology framework (Halle and Marantz, 1993).

- Non-Active voice morphology appears on passives, reflexives and unaccusatives.

- Embick suggests that non-active morphology is a reflection of unaccusative syntax.[5]

- Unaccusative syntax is any syntactic structure where the external argument is not projected.

  - Passives and unaccusatives are known to lack external arguments.
  - Embick argues that for these languages, reflexives lack an external argument and the internal argument raises to subject position.

- At spell-out, whenever there is a syntactic structure without the projection of the external argument, the non-active morphology is inserted.

- In the tree below, v' is projected but not the full vP or spec vP where the external argument would be placed.

(21)

$$
\begin{array}{c}
\text{XP} \\
|\\
\text{v'} \\
\diagup\diagdown \\
\text{v}\quad\text{VP} \\
|\\
\sqrt{ROOT}
\end{array}
$$
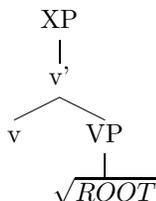
4.2   Non-Active in Albanian Impulsatives

- Non-Active voice morphology in Albanian also appears on passives(22), reflexives(23) and unaccusatives(24).

(22)   *Molla   hahej.*
       apple.nom.def nonact.pst.3sg
       'The apple was eaten.'

(23)   *Unë   ushqehem.*
       1S.Nom feed.1S.Nonact
       'I feed myself.'

(24)   *Papritmas, u   duk   dielli.*
       suddenly   nonact appear.3.s.pst.nonact sun.def.nom
       'Suddenly, the sun appeared.'

- I propose that the null impulsative head selects for v'.

- Since the external argument of the overt verb does not project, the non-active morphology is inserted.

- However, since v' selects for v, agenthood is introduced into the semantics.

---

[5]This assumes that external arguments are not introduced by the verb itself but introduced by a higher functional head, Voice. (Kratzer, 1996)

(25)

ImpulseP'

nonact Impulse   v'

v   VP

|

dance
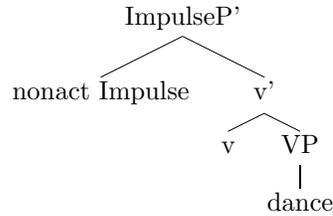
4.3   Passive in Finnish Impulsatives

- Passive morphology in Finnish appears when the external argument is not present.

  (26)   *Etana   tapetaan.*
          slug.acc kill-pass-AGR
   'The slug was killed.'

- However, it is not present in unaccusatives or reflexives.

  (27)   *Etana   kuoli   puutarha-ssa.*
          slug.nom died.3sg garden-iness
          'A slug died in the garden.'

  (28)   *Jussi   naaki   itse-nsaa.*
          Jussi.nom see.past refl
          'Jussi saw himself.'

- Embick notes that reflexives cross-linguistically vary and may not contain unaccusative syntax.

- However, a further restriction must be placed on Finnish to rule out unaccusatives.

- Unaccusatives are like passives except they have an agent.

- I propose that the passive morpheme is a reflection of unaccusative syntax with an agent feature in the head of little v.
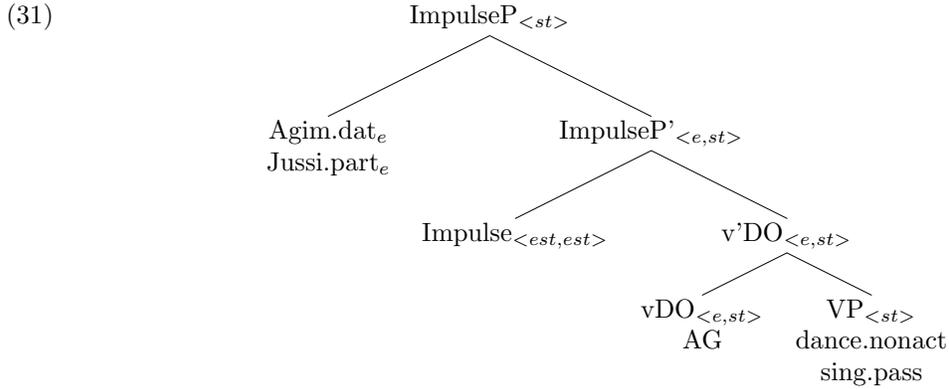
  (29)

  XP

  |

  v'

  v   VP

  AG

  $\sqrt{ROOT}$
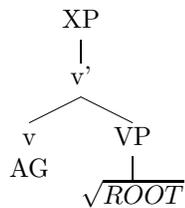
- However, this proposal over-generates and would allow for unaccusative verbs to be selected by the impulsative head.

- I propose that the impulsative selects for vDO' instead.

- vDO is the flavor of v associated with unergatives and consumption verbs (Folli and Harley, 2002).

- This selectional restriction explains why impulsative readings are unavailable on unaccusative verbs.

5   Analysis

- I propose that the modality arises from a covert impulsative head with the following semantics:

(30) $\llbracket$**Impulse**$\rrbracket = \lambda P_{<e,st>} \lambda x.\lambda e.\lambda w.\forall w'$[w' is compatible with what x feels like in e in w] $\rightarrow [\exists e'$ in w'.P(x)(e')]

- The semantic denotation of the impulsative contains a number of elements.

    - Modality
    - Experiencer Argument
    - Additional Event

- The denotation calls for

    - a predicate (the overt verb +v')
    - an entity (the experiencer and the agent of the overt predicate)
    - an event
    - a world

- This covert functional head attaches at vDO', before the external argument would be projected.

- The external argument of the internal predicate is blocked from being projected.

- The impulsative head assigns dative case to its argument in Albanian and partitive case to its argument it Finnish.

- At Spell-out the passive morpheme in Finnish and the nonactive morphology in Albanian is inserted.

- This is illustrated in the following tree in (31).

(31)

$$\text{ImpulseP}_{<st>}$$

```
                    ImpulseP<st>
                   /            \
          Agim.dat_e          ImpulseP'<e,st>
          Jussi.part_e        /            \
                      Impulse<est,est>   v'DO<e,st>
                                         /        \
                                  vDO<e,st>      VP<st>
                                    AG        dance.nonact
                                               sing.pass
```

(32)   a. $\llbracket$**dance**$\rrbracket = \lambda e.$ dance(e)
                 $\llbracket$**vDO**$\rrbracket = \lambda x\lambda e.$ Agt(e,x)
                 Event Identification

         b. $\llbracket$**vDO'**$\rrbracket = \lambda x.\lambda e.$dance(e) & Agt(e,x)
                 $\llbracket$**Imp**$\rrbracket = \lambda P_{<e,vt>}\lambda x\lambda e.\lambda w.\forall w'$ [w' is compatible with what x feels like in e in w] $\rightarrow [\exists e'$ in w'.P(x)(e')]
                 Function Application

         c. $\llbracket$**ImpP'**$\rrbracket = \lambda x\lambda e.\lambda w.\forall w'$ [w' is compatible with what x feels like in e in w] $\rightarrow [\exists e'$ in w'.dance(e') & Agt(e,x)]
                 $\llbracket$**Agim**$\rrbracket =$ Agim
                 Function Application

         d. $\llbracket$**ImpP**$\rrbracket = \lambda e.\lambda w.\forall w'$ [w' is compatible with what Agim feels like in e in w] $\rightarrow [\exists e'$ in w' .dance(e') & Agt(e',Agim)]

6 Conclusion

- While these phenomena have been previously accounted for separately, a cross-linguistic look brings a new perspective.

- The similarities between the impulsatives in both Albanian and Finnish, in both morphology and selectional restrictions, suggest they are the same phenomena.

- A unified analysis is achieved by positing a new grammatical category of Impulsatives.

- There is evidence that impulsatives may appear in further unrelated languages, including the South Slavic languages and the Quechua languages.

  Bulgarian

  (33)   *Na decata   im   se   raboteče.*
         P   children.the 3Pl.DAT REFL work.IMP.3S
         'The children were in a working mood/ felt like working.'
         (Rivero, 2009, Example 1a)

  Quechua

  (34)   *Nuka-ta-ka punu-* **naya***-rka.*
         1s.acc.Top sleep.Desid.3pst
         'I want to sleep.'
         (Cole and Hermon, 1981)

References

Peter Cole and Gabriella Hermon. Subjecthood and islandhood: evidence from Quechua. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 12(1):1–30, 1981.

David Embick. Unaccusative syntax and verbal alternations. In Artemis Alexiadou, Elena Anagnostopoulou, and Martin Evereart, editors, *The Unaccusativity Puzzle: Explorations of the Syntax-Lexicon Interface*, pages 137–158. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004.

Raffaella Folli and Heidi Harley. Consuming results in Italian and English: Flavors of v. In Paula Kempchinsky and Roumyana Slabakova., editors, *Workshop on Aspect at the University of Iowa*. Kluwer, 2002.

Morris Halle and Alec Marantz. Distributed morphology and the pieces of inflection. In Kenneth Hale and Samuel Jay Keyser, editors, *The View from Building 20*, pages 111–176. MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993.

Dalina Kallulli. Unaccusatives with dative causers and experiencers: a unified account. In A. Meinunger & W. Abraham (eds.) D. Hole, editor, *Datvies and other cases*, 2006.

Angelika Kratzer. Severing the external argument from its verb. In Johan Rooryck and Laurie Zaring, editors, *Phrase Structure and the Lexicon*, pages 109–137. Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, The Netherlands, 1996.

Liina Pylkkänen. The syntax of internal and external causation. In *Proceedings of the Texas Linguistics Society*, 1999.

María Luisa Rivero. Intensionality, high applicatives and aspect: Involuntary state constructions in Slovenian and Bulgarian. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory*, 27(1), 2009.