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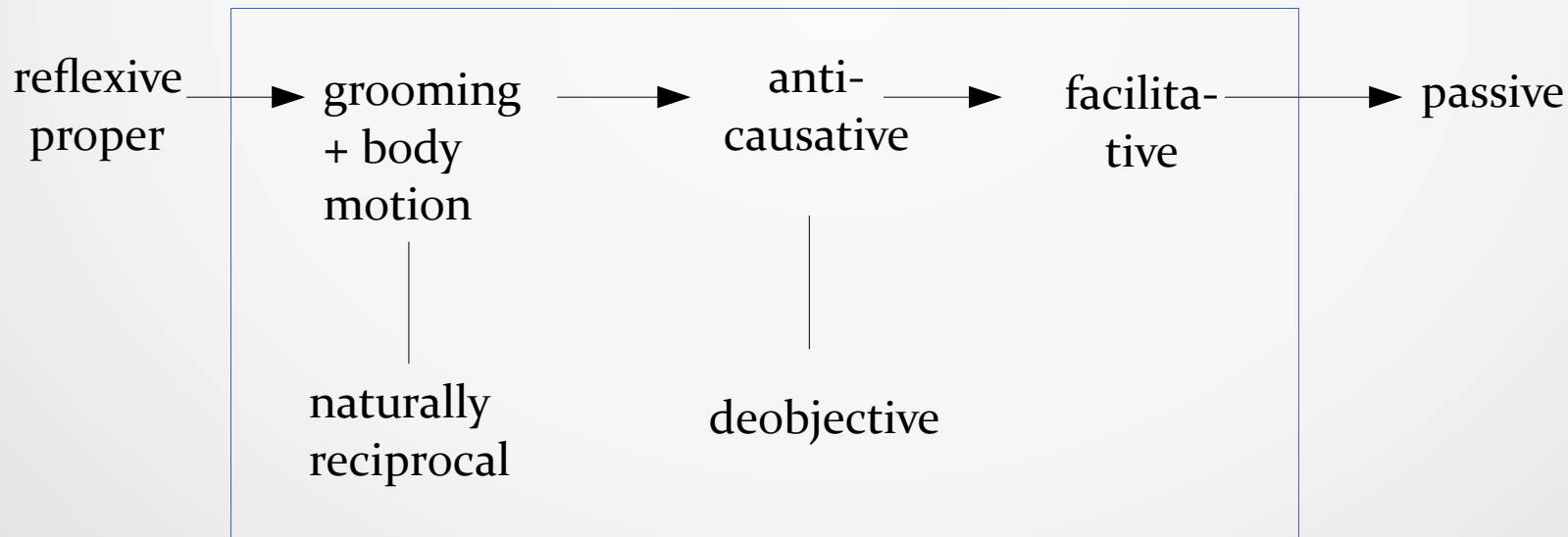
Interesting middle-voice grams in Baltic II:
Reflexive permissives and curatives

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The middle voice

- The middle is the semantic domain extending between reflexives and passives
- Cf. the semantic map of reflexives (Haspelmath 2003 on the basis of Gerniušienė 1987 and Kemmer 1993)



The middle voice

- The crucial line of division is between reflexive constructions proper, where a reflexive pronoun occupies a syntactic position of its own, and those constructions where a marker of reflexive origin has lost this ability and functions as a grammatical marker:

Russian

Ja *vižu* ***sebja*** (**vižu-s'*) *v zerkale.*
I.NOM see.PRS.1SG **self.ACC** (see.PRS.1SG-RFL) in mirror.LOC
'I see myself in the mirror.'

Ja *breju-s'* *pered* *zerkalom*
I.NOM shave.PRS.1SG-RFL in.front.of mirror.INS.SG
'I shave in front of the mirror.'

Permissives

- Permissives are complement-taking predicates (related to causatives) denoting a person's failure to prevent something from happening (this may but need not involve a verbal act of permission), e.g.

Mary allowed the children to play in the courtyard.

- Argument structure:
 - Permitter
 - Permittee
 - Object of permission (a propositional argument usually expressed in the form of an embedded infinitival clause)

Reflexive permissives

- By reflexive permissives I mean constructions denoting a person's failure to prevent something from being done to herself/himself, i.e. the permittor.

Lithuanian

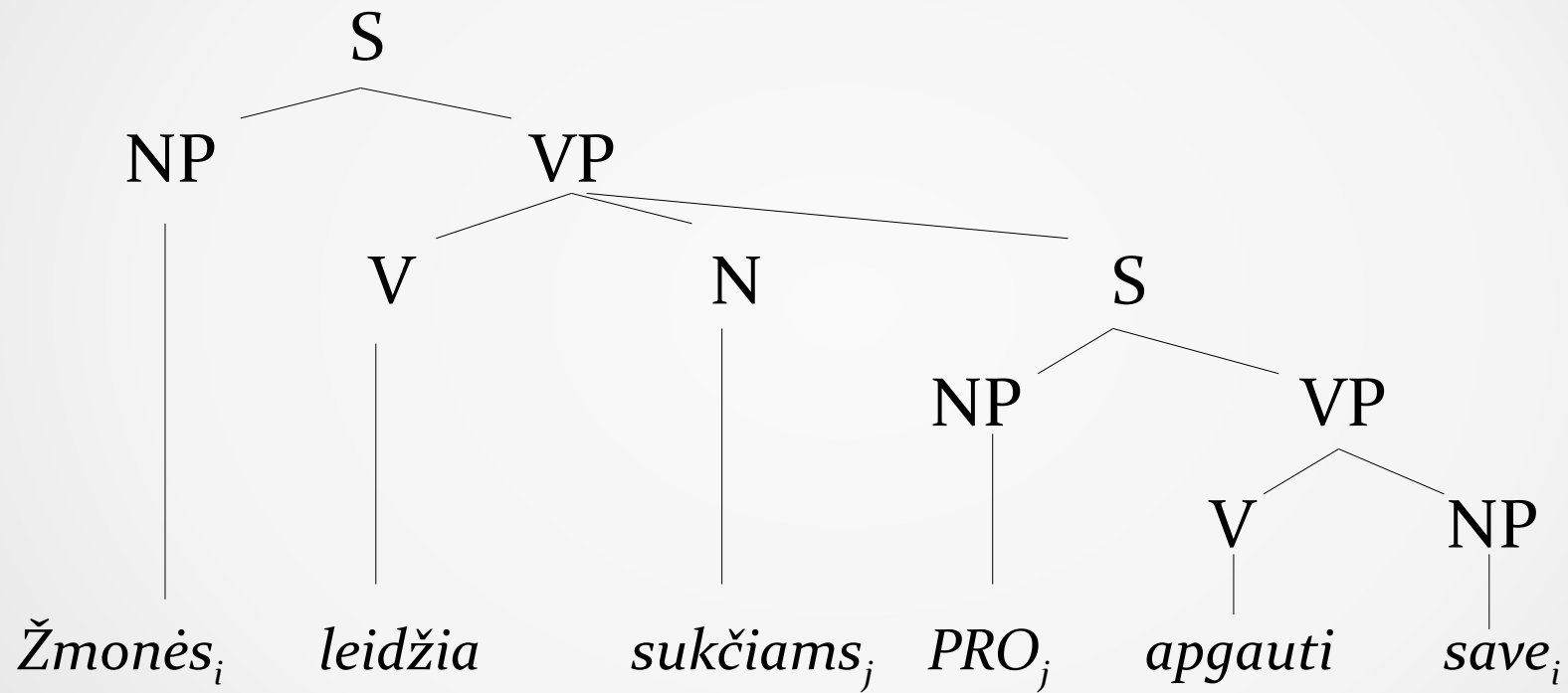
Žmon-ės *leidžia* *save* *apgauti*
people-NOM.PL allow.PRS.3 **self.ACC** deceive-INF

sukči-ams

impostor-DAT.PL

‘People allow themselves to be deceived by impostors.’

Syntactic structure



Permissive middles

Latvian

Pats

self-NOM.SG.M

ļāvie-s

allow.PST.2SG-RFL

vainīg-s,

guilty-NOM.SG.M

aplaupī-t-ies.

rob-INF-RFL

ka

that

‘It’s your own fault you allowed yourself to be robbed.’

The use of the affixal reflexive markers in this construction is remarkable because the affixal reflexive marker of Latvian has lost its original reflexive function.

Reflexive markers in Latvian

Latvian

<i>Es</i>	<i>redzu</i>	<i>sevi</i>	(* <i>redzo-s</i>)
I-NOM	see.PRS.1SG	self.ACC	see.PRS.1SG-RFL

spogul-ī.

mirror-LOC.SG

‘I see myself in the mirror.’

<i>Es</i>	<i>skujo-s</i>	<i>spoguļ-a</i>	<i>priekš-ā</i>
I-NOM	shave.PRS.1SG-RFL	mirror-GEN.SG	front-LOC.SG

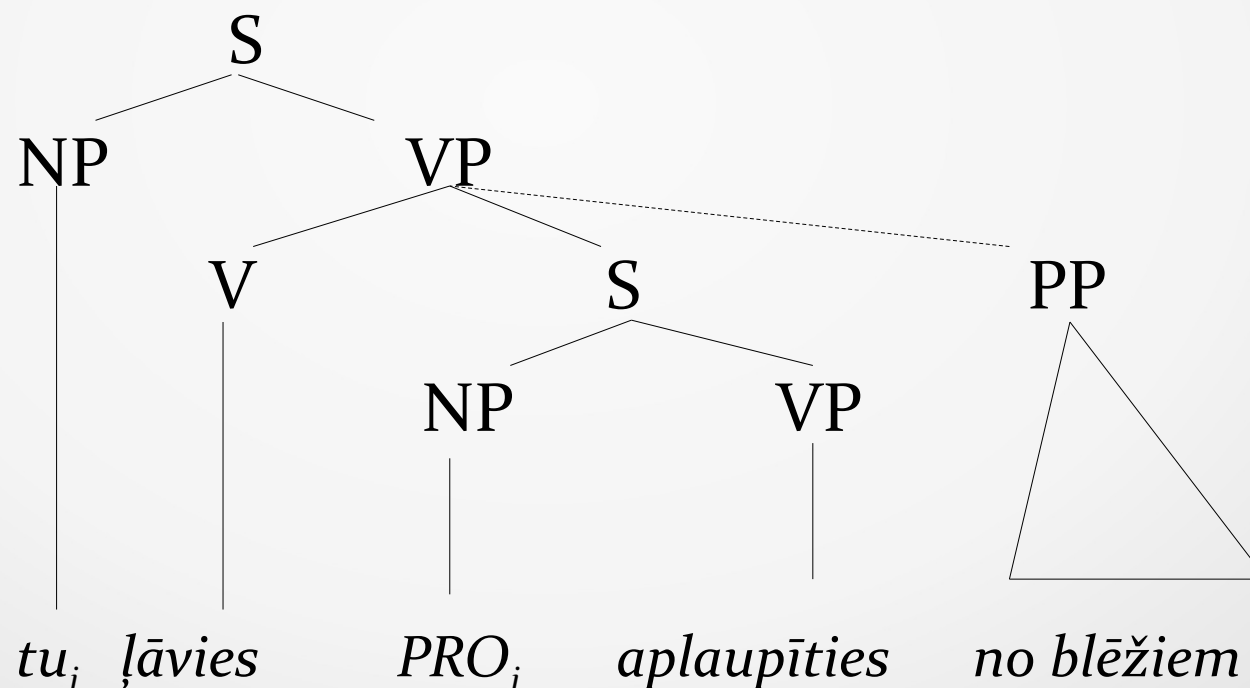
‘I shave in front of the mirror.’

Permissive middle

- The Latvian construction *ļauties aplaupīties* can therefore not be reflexive either
- It is a middle-voice construction just like the grooming type, the anticausative type etc.
- The affixal reflexive marker having lost its ability to occupy a syntactic position of its own, the syntactic structure must have undergone restructuring.

Permissive middle

- The exact syntactic structure after restructuring would be a topic for a separate study; we could imagine different scenarios, e.g.



Reflexive marking in the permissive middle

- The situation of the reflexive pronoun in the permissive reflexive construction is specific: it is associated with the matrix clause verb in virtue of marking coreferentiality with its subject and with the embedded clause infinitive in virtue of being assigned a theta role by it.
- As a result, the reflexive marker has no natural locus when the permissive reflexive becomes a permissive middle: it is not obvious to which verb the affixal reflexive marker should accrete.
- In fact, we observe considerable oscillation in this regard.

Latvian

In the Latvian permissive middle construction the reflexive marker may be attached to the matrix clause verb:

[*Citādi būs kā manam draugam, tagad nožēlo,*]

ka ne-lāv-ās pierunā-t

that NEG-allow-PST.3RFL persuade-INF

nopirk-t dārg-āk-u model-i.

buy-INF expensive-COMP-ACC.SG model-ACC.SG

‘[Otherwise you will experience the same as my friend, who now regrets] he didn’t allow himself to be persuaded to buy a more expensive model.

Latvian

Or it may be attached to the embedded clause infinitive:

Nevajadzēja *ļaut* *iebiedē-t-ies,*
NEG-be.needed.PST.3 allow.INF intimidate-INF-RFL

[*reāli Tev ir fiziski uzbrukts un izteikti nopietni draudi*].

‘You shouldn’t have allowed yourself to be intimidated: [you have in fact been physically assaulted and seriously threatened]

Latvian

Or it may be attached to both:

Lai tie

HORT those.NOM.PL.M

ne-ļauj-ie-s

NEG-allow-PRS.2SG-RFL

kreditor-i

creditor-NOM.PL

iebiedē-t-ies.

intimidate-INF-RFL

draud,

threaten.PRS.3

‘Let those creditors utter threats, don’t allow yourself to be intimidated.’

Renewed permissive reflexive

- After having ousted the affixal marker from properly reflexive use, the orthotonic marker expands further and a new permissive reflexive construction arises:

[*Starptautiskā vides aizstāvju organizācija «Greenpeace» nepārstās cīnīties par Arktikas glābšanu*]

un ne-ļaus sevi iebiedēt.

and NEG-allow.FUT.3 self.ACC intimidate.INF

‘[The international environmental organization Greenpeace will not cease fighting to save the Arctic] and will not allow itself to be intimidated.

Renewed permissive reflexive

- The two grammemes may, however, co-exist and intermingle, cf. the threefold reflexive marking in the following ex.:

<i>Es</i>	<i>atceros,</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>vēl-ā</i>	<i>ruden-ī</i>
I.NOM	remember.PRS.1SG	that	late-LOC	autumn-LOC
<i>ļāvo-s</i>	<i>sevi</i>	<i>pierunātie-s</i>		
allow.PST.1SG-RFL	self.ACC	persuade.INF-RFL		
<i>uz viņ-a</i>	<i>koncert-u...</i>			
to 3-GEN.SG.M	concert-ACC.SG			

‘I remember that in late autumn I allowed myself to be persuaded [to go] to a concert of his.’

Old Lithuanian

A similar situation as observed in modern Latvian is reflected in 17th century Lithuanian texts.

Reflexive marking on the matrix clause verb:

Old Lithuanian

<i>bet</i>	<i>wardu</i>	<i>mano</i>	<i>WIESZPATS</i>	<i>jems</i>
but	name.INS.SG	my	Lord	3.DAT.PL.M
<i>ne-si-dawiau</i>		<i>pažyñt.</i>		
NEG-RFL-give.PST.1SG		know.INF		

‘but by my name YHWH I did not make myself known to them’ ChOT, Ex 6.2

Old Lithuanian

Reflexive marking on the embedded infinitive:

Old Lithuanian

bet ne-dok pa-fi-zynt
but NEG-give-IMP.2SG PFX-RFL-know.INF

anamuy zmoguy
that.DAT.SG.M man.DAT.SG

‘but make not thyself known unto the man’ ChOT, Ruth 3.3

Old Lithuanian

With reflexive marking both on the matrix clause verb and on the embedded infinitive:

Old Lithuanian

<i>Jozefas</i>	<i>galaufiey</i>	<i>doda-ś</i>	
Joseph.NOM.SG	finally	give.PRS.3-RFL	
<i>pa-fi-zyńt</i>	<i>brolamus</i>	<i>fawo</i>	
PFX-RFL.know.INF	brother.DAT.PL	RPO	

‘Joseph finally makes himself known to his brothers.’ (ChOT, chapter survey of Gen. 45)

Beyond Baltic

- The loss of the properly reflexive function by reflexive markers is probably not a precondition for a permissive middle to arise.
- However, the possibility of establishing beyond doubt whether a language has a permissive middle is given only in languages where a reflexive marker has lost the properly reflexive function.
- These languages include
 - Baltic
 - East Slavic
 - Scandinavian

East Slavic

- In Russian the only productive construction now is a permissive reflexive:

Petr ne dal sebja ubedit'.

Peter NEG give.PST.M self.ACC convince.INF

‘Peter did not allow himself to be convinced.’

- However, the Russian National Corpus also gives evidence for older constructions with *-sja* (a permissive middle)

East Slavic

spaniel' [...] *da-l-sja* *počesa-t'* *za* *ux-om*
spaniel.NOM.SG give-PST[M]-RFL scratch-INF behind ear-INS
'The spaniel allowed itself to be scratched behind its ear.' (M. Šiškin, 2009)

tol'ko *by* *ostrič'-sja* *on* *da-l-sja*
only IRR give.a.haircut.INF.RFL he.NOM give-PST[M]-RFL
'If only he would allow his hair to be cut.' (E. Permjak, 1955–1965)

Vadja *ne* *srazu* *da-l-sja* *Korolev-u*
PN.NOM.SG NEG at.once give-PST[M]-RFL PN-DAT.SG

sebja *ugovori-t'*
self.ACC persuade-INF

'Vadya did not allow himself to be persuaded by Korolev at once.' (A. Iličevskij, 2007)

East Slavic

Ukrainian

[*Kit dovho ne išov het' z toho miscja de buv znajdenyj, potim*]

zovsim oslab i da-v-sja zlovy-ty-s'.

completely grow.weak.PST.M and give-PST.M-RFL catch-INF.RFL

‘[For a long time the cat wouldn’t leave the place where it had been found] but then it grew weak and allowed itself to be caught.’

Belarusian

Ale ūsë nadarma – ni raz-u

but all.NOM.SG.N in.vain NEG.EMPH time-GEN.SG

nja da-ŭ-sja ašuka-c-ca

NEG give-PST.M-RFL deceive-INF-RFL

‘But it was all in vain—not once did he allow himself to be deceived.’

Scandinavian

In Scandinavian the productive construction is now reflexive:

Swedish

Jag låter mig inte lura-s av kvinn-or.
I let.PRS me NEG fool.INF-RFL by woman-PL
'I don't allow myself to be fooled by women.'

But traces of other constructions seem to survive:

Swedish

SSIF lät-s inte nedslå-s av baklängesmål-et.
SSIF let.PST-RFL NEG discourage.INF-RFL by counter-goal-DEF
'SSIF [an ice-hockey club] did not allow itself to be discouraged by the counter-goal.'

Scandinavian

As in Latvian and Russian, one finds old and new reflexive markers combined:

[I en annan familj, alldeles bredvid, där bodde det en kvinna]

som gladeligen lät-s sig fotografera-s,
REL gladly let.PST-RFL self photograph.INF-RFL

både ute och inne.

both outdoors and indoors

‘In another family, just next door, there was a woman who gladly allowed herself to be photographed, both indoors and outdoors.’

Two types of reflexive marking

- Initially, the alternative placement of the affixal reflexive marker on the matrix verb or the infinitive just reflects an oscillation not associated with any functional difference.
- In course of time, reflexive marking may become restricted to the matrix verb and is then lexicalized.
- Or reflexivity may continue to be marked on the infinitive (usually combined with marking on the matrix clause verb) and in this case we are dealing with an open class of reflexive-marked middle-voice forms, that is, a middle-voice gram.

The permissive among middle voice grams

- The notion of ‘permissive middle’ strictly applies only to the infinitives used in permissive constructions

Old Lithuanian

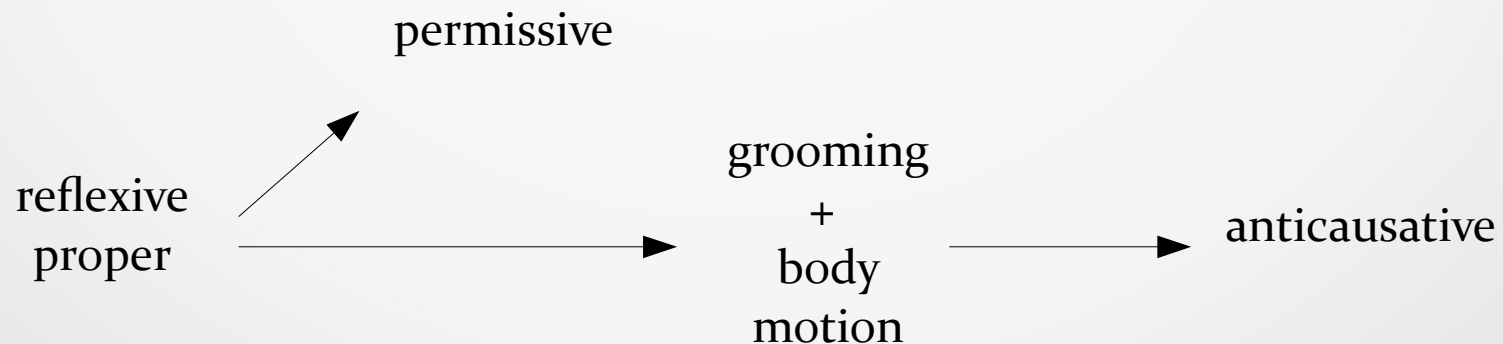
(leisti) persiprašyti ‘be entreated’,
persikalbėti ‘be persuaded’
susigauti ‘be caught’

Latvian

(ļaut) maldināties ‘be misled’
aplauņties ‘be robbed’
iebiedēties ‘be intimidated’

The permissive on the semantic map

- The permissive middle is obviously contiguous to the reflexive proper, as it originates as a permissive reflexive.
- it cannot (for conceptual reasons) be squeezed in between the reflexive and the grooming/body-motion type, as in these two types the subject is an agent, whereas in the permissive type it is a patient:



Permissive and curative

- There is one more type that closely resembles the permissive middle but has not hitherto figured on semantic maps of reflexives/middles, viz.

Russian

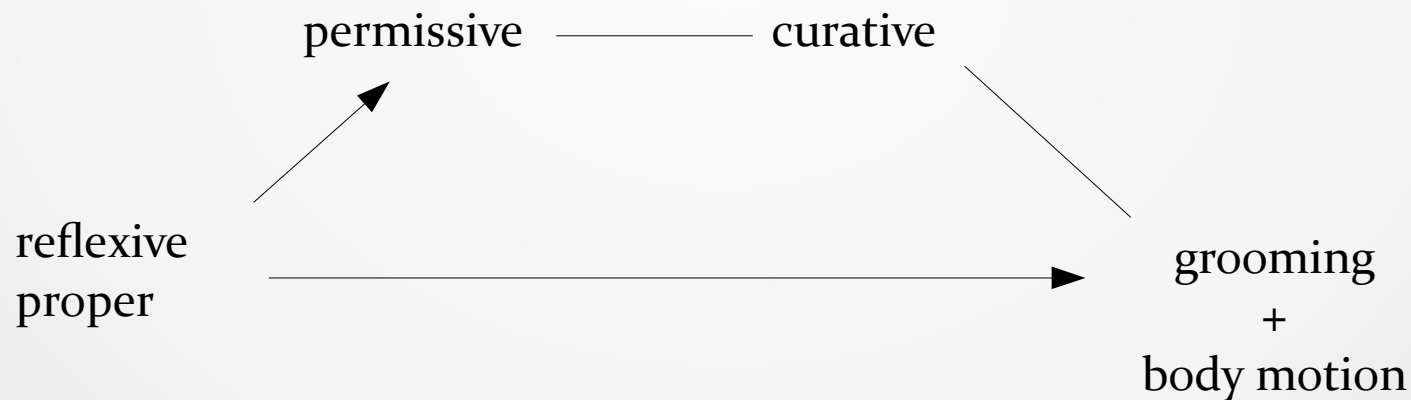
Petr *vsegda* *striž-ët-sja* *u* *ët-ogo*
PN.NOM always give.a.haircut-PRS.3SG at this-GEN.SG.M
parikmaxer-a.
haidresser-GEN

‘Peter always has his hair cut at this haidresser’s’

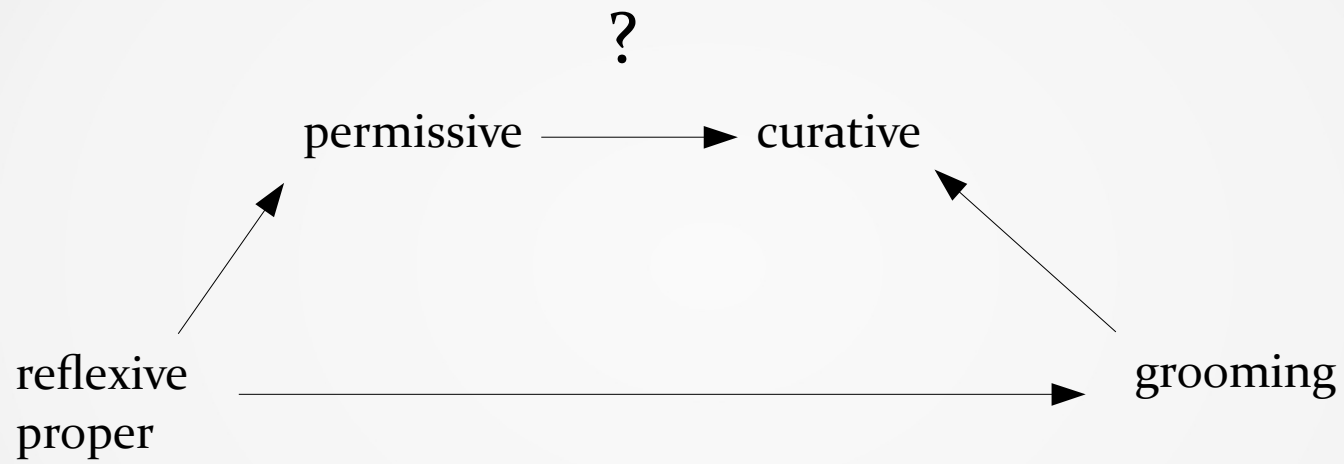
- This is called the ‘causative-reflexive’ in Nedjalkov-Sil’nickij (1969), but I will call it the ‘curative type’

Permissive and curative

- The curative type shows an affinity with the permissive type (the subject is a patient but also an 'initiator' in virtue of either commissioning a service or not preventing something from being done) and with the grooming type (the agency of the service-provider is ignored as it can be taken for granted).



Diachronic paths



Diachronic paths

- Until now it has been taken for granted that the curative is just a variety of the grooming type
- Toops 1998: ‘middles’ are underdetermined with regard to the identity of the agent: Russian *strič'sja* can therefore mean ‘cut one’s (own) hair’ or ‘have one’s hair cut’, the interpretation being contextually or situationally determined.
- It is true that mediopassives tend to develop curative uses:

Albanian (example courtesy of Irena Sawicka)

<i>Enver-i</i>	<i>gjithmonë</i>	<i>qeth-et</i>	<i>tek i</i>	<i>njëjt-i</i>
Enver-DEF	always	cut-PRS.3SG.MPASS	at ADJ	same-DEF

berber.

barber.NOM.SG

‘Enver always has his hair cut at the same barber’s.’

Diachronic paths

- Mediopassives also develop permissive uses, cf. the Hebrew *niph'al tolerativum* (Gesenius-Kautsch 1909, 137)

Biblical Hebrew

way-yē'āter

and-entreat.IPF.3SG.M.MPASS

l-ô

to-3SG.M

YHWH

the Lord

‘and the Lord allowed himself to be entreated by him’ (Gen. 25.21)

- But middles of reflexive origin might behave differently from dedicated mediopassives. Reflexives do not automatically develop curative uses when they reach the middle-voice stage:

German

?*Peter rasierte sich beim Friseur.*

Intended meaning: ‘He had a shave at the barber’s’

Diachronic paths

- Swedish has a curative reflexive:

<i>Jag</i>	<i>klipp-er</i>	<i>mig</i>	<i>hos</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>iranier</i>	<i>som</i>	<i>inte</i>
I	cut-PRS	me	at	INDEF	Iranian	REL	NEG
<i>kan</i>	<i>svenska.</i>						
can	Swedish						

‘I have my hair cut by an Iranian who doesn’t speak Swedish.’

- This, however, must have supplanted a curative middle **Jag klippes* ‘I have my hair cut’, because the affixal marker -s must have gone through all stages between the original reflexive function and its present-day mainly passive function; this includes the grooming + body-motion stage.
- True, Danish does not have this use (subsequent loss? Failure to develop?)

**Jeg klipper mig hos frisøren.*

Permissives and curatives

- The diachronic link between permissive and curative middles is difficult to substantiate as in many languages the permissive middle is covert (just like the grooming or body-motion middle)
- It is, however, interesting to note that those languages where the existence of a permissive middle can be established (because of the formal differentiation of markers) also have a curative middle (or a curative reflexive developed from it)
- In view of the fact that not all reflexives develop curative uses (even if they have reached the middle-voice stage of development), it seems tempting to look for specific developments in the domain of the middle voice that could prompt their rise.

Concluding remarks

- The permissive middle as attested in Latvian and historically and / or residually in other languages is not lexicalized: it is a type of grammatical marking occurring in a specific construction
- In this sense the permissive middle is comparable to the various types of facilitative middles, which can be argued to be inflectional both for reasons of argument structure and because they are derived ‘online’ rather than taken from the lexicon (cf. Holvoet, Grzybowska & Rembiałkowska 2015)
- The middle voice is a split category: many middle-voice forms are in the lexicon, but others are inflectional and can thus be regarded as representing grammatical voice—not, of course, in the sense of an Aristotelian or Jakobsonian category but as a cluster of related voice operations with construction-specific meanings.