

Title: The Myth of the Russian Long-Distance Reflexive
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The ability of the Russian reflexive pronoun *sebjja* in a bi-clausal infinitival sentence to refer back to the subject of the matrix verb, as in *Mat' velela doceri nalit' sebe caju*, 'The mother ordered the daughter to pour herself (i.e., the mother) some tea,' is over-stated in the professional linguistics literature (Klenin 1975, Rappaport 1986, Ruicka 1973, Paduceva 1985, Bailyn 1993, and others). Such sentences exist more in myth than in reality.

To judge by examples cited in the professional literature, if the matrix verb expresses a greater-to-lesser power differential between the outer and the inner subject, depriving the inner subject of independence of action, then LD reference becomes at least a stylistic option, especially when the second subject is omitted *On velel vyzvat' k sebe starsego vraca*, 'He commanded that the senior doctor be summoned to (him)self' - I. Babel) or when the inner action cannot logically be reflexive upon the inner subject *Deduska prikazal nas s sestricej posadit' za stol prjamo protiv sebjja*, 'Grandfather ordered me and my sister to be placed at the table directly opposite him(self)' - S. Aksakov).

The present examination, reporting on questionnaires administered to native speakers by four independent researchers, and on the results of a contest sponsored by the Russian language helpsite <Gramota.Ru>, does not confirm the idea of Russian long-distance (LD) reflexivity in the infinitive construction under examination, despite its extensive discussion in the literature. Artificial sentences found in linguistics articles are clearly not the best source of information for coming to conclusions on this subject. Except for a few well-circumscribed systematic exceptions, no native-speaker tendency toward LD reflexive reference in this construction was encountered but, instead, considerable resistance to it.