Wer kann, der kann
A tautology at the interfaces
(Barbara Sonnenhauser, Zürich)

Logically speaking, tautologies do not have any informational value. From a linguistic point of view, however, they exhibit communicative import. To account for that import, two main types of approaches have been pursued. 'Radical pragmatics' approaches regard it to result from implicatures which arise from the violation of the first quantity maxim. Pointing out that most tautologies cannot be felicitously translated, 'radical semantics' approaches deny that their communicative function can be derived from language-independet pragmatic principles and regard it as being semantically coded.

Against this background, the tautological relative clause *wer kann, der kann* (roughly: 'those who can, do') proves an interesting test case for both approaches: having a formal and functional equivalent in Slovene (*kdor zna, zna*) but not in Russian, it is problematic for both radical approaches. Instead, it emerges as a prime example of the interaction of semantics and pragmatics. The present paper aims at accounting for this interaction by drawing on three aspects: 1) the relative clause structure, 2) the specific kind of tautology at hand, 3) the semantics of the modal verbs involved (*znati* 'know; can' and *können* 'can').

Since with respect to the semantics of the modal, Slovene and German turn out to be more similar to each other than to other members of their language families (such as Russian and English), *wer kann, der kann* is revealing not only for the semantics-pragmatics interface, but also for questions concerning areal linguistics.