



NOVI SAD LINGUISTIC COLLOQUIUM 7

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Department of English

Faculty of Philosophy, University Novi Sad

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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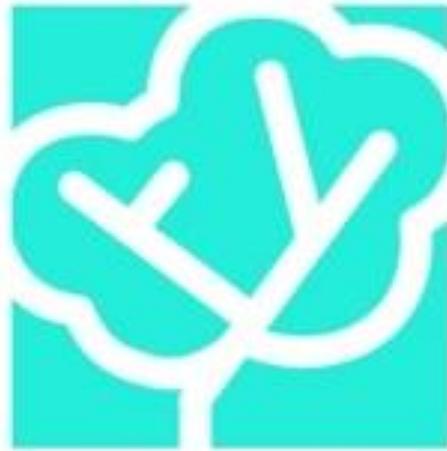
Tanja Milićev (Department of English, University of Novi Sad)

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MERGE & MOVE

The case of temporal bare-NP adverbials in Serbo-Croatian

Maša Bešlin (University of Novi Sad)

This paper is concerned with a class of elements referred to as Bare-NP Adverbials (BNPAs), surface NPs which appear in adjunct positions. More specifically, it aims to establish the structural configuration and case licensing conditions for these elements. Their adjunct status should prevent them from being licensed by the verb, yet they do not appear next to any other overt case licenser. Although no consensus has been reached in the literature regarding this issue, the main two approaches to BNPAs have claimed that: (i) they are, in fact, PPs headed by a null preposition (Bresnan and Grimshaw 1978, Emonds 1987, McCawley 1988), or (ii) they are a "special" type of NP, headed by a nominal bearing an inherent Case feature which can percolate up and case mark the entire phrase (Larson 1985). The two approaches, consequently, make different predictions in terms of morphological case-marking of BNPAs. Although both can, in principle, explain the English data, I argue, on the basis of data from Serbo-Croatian, that Larson's approach is empirically flawed, as it cannot explain why temporal BNPAs in Serbo-Croatian can be marked for both genitive and accusative case (1).

- (1) a. Maja je videla Jovana **tog dana**.
Maja saw Jovan that.GEN day.GEN
b. Maja je videla Jovana **taj dan**.
Maja saw Jovan that.ACC day.ACC

If the nominal head of the BNPA were inherently case-marked, no such differences should arise. The present paper adopts a form of the PP approach, on which specific P elements *tokom* (during) and *u/na* (in/on) are responsible for the different case markings of the above BNPAs. The interpretation of genitive/accusative BNPAs (or, more precisely, their temporal reference) is, thus, determined by the null preposition which licenses them. I also discuss the view advanced in Szucsich 2002 that the choice of case in BNPAs is influenced by aspectual properties of the verb, i.e. that accusative BNPAs can only occur with imperfectives. Although the choice of certain prenominals such as *svaki* (every) can be misleading and result in ungrammaticality in perfective contexts (2a), (2b) shows that, when it is preceded by the neutral *taj* (that), an accusative BNPA can modify both perfective and imperfective verbs.

- (2) a. Marko je napisao knjigu **svaki dan**.
Marko wrote.PERF book every.ACC day.ACC
b. Marko je napisao knjigu **taj dan**.
Marko wrote.IMP book that.ACC day.ACC

Thus, BNPAs are not aspectually sensitive, though they do contribute different temporal meanings to the verb they modify. The present paper also extends Abels's 'P clitic proposal to BNPAs: since BNPAs cannot be cliticized, this provides further support for their PP status, as there is no principled reason why non-argument NPs should not be able to cliticize.

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The influence of negation on the processing of negated antonyms

Isidora Dekić (University of Novi Sad)

In this paper, we wanted to investigate cognitive relevancy of the division of adjectives according to their boundedness. Previous studies which investigated the influence of negation on the processing of antonymic pairs of adjectives propose that this influence depends on the boundedness of adjectives. According to the Boundedness hypothesis, negation of the unbounded adjective mitigates its meaning (*-beautiful ≠ ugly*), while the negation of the unbounded one is equal to its antonym (*-alive = dead*) (Paradis i Willners 2006: 1054). Thus, we hypothesized that the participants' reaction time will be longer on the antonyms of bounded adjectives than on the antonyms of unbounded ones. Twenty pairs of antonyms, 10 bounded and 10 unbounded, which were used in the experiment were chosen in the pilot (*Google Questionnaire*). In the analysis of data collected from 39 participants, it was shown that in the participants' perception of boundedness has a significant effect ($t = -43.222$, $p < .001$). In the *Probe Recognition Task*, the participants, 35 native speakers of Serbian, were instructed to read sentences and after 1500 ms (Kaup et al. 2006: 1048) of empty screen, respond whether the presented word (*probe*) appeared in the previous sentence. In the experimental condition, probe words were antonyms of the negated adjectives. In the analysis, effect of boundedness of adjectives was not statistically significant, which is not in accordance with the Boundedness hypothesis. However, we cannot dismiss this hypothesis either, but we can interpret the results as the possible indicator of cognitive irrelevancy of the division of adjectives based on their boundedness; of the negator perceived only as a mitigation modifier of the adjectives; or as the indicator of the availability of the representation of the negated adjective even after 1500 ms.

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- Giora, R., Balaban, N., Fein, O., & Alkabets, I. (2005). Negation as positivity in disguise. Figurative language comprehension: Social and cultural influences. 233-258.

How Late do Foreign Languages Catch Our (Visual) Attention?

Lela Ivaz & Jon Andoni Duñabeitia (Basque Center on Cognition, Brain, Language)

Much remains unknown about where foreign language effects stem from: the difficulty in processing foreign languages, the emotional distance they evoke, or a combination of both these factors. The eye-tracking technique in combination with the perceptual matching and learning paradigm (i.e., the so-called “self-paradigm”) allows for the appraisal of the temporal course and the exact type of change in processing stimuli. We endeavored to determine whether there were qualitative or quantitative differences in how we process information in native vs. foreign languages. Differences driven by foreign-language-induced emotional distance would be observed as a different morphology in fixation proportions, while an increase in the cognitive cost would manifest as a temporal delay in the effects’ timing. Our results suggest no such temporal shift, but a change in the pattern of the probability of the eye-gaze fixation, such that visual attention is captured earlier in the native-tongue context as compared to the foreign language one. We argue that our results are evidence in favor of the emotional distance evoked by foreign languages.

On Gender in Language Comrehension from a Psycholinguistics Perspective

Miloš Košprdić (University of Novi Sad)

Previous research suggests that, in the process of language comprehension, different pieces of information are taken as relevant in different languages depending on the language structure. The aim of our research was to determine whether the familiarity of the referential gender influences the process of language comprehension in speakers of the Serbian language. Previous research carried out in the Serbian language showed that the familiarity of the referential gender facilitates the reaction times of the respondents to isolated words (cf. Radanović & Milin 2011). Since the process of language understanding does not take place at the level of isolated words, but at the level of statements encoded by more complex syntactic structures (at least sentences), we aimed to check this in a more natural context.

In Serbian, there is a special class of nouns suitable for exploring this phenomenon. On the basis of their properties (nouns that end with *-ica* like *izdajica* in certain situations behave not only as epicene (general gender nouns), but also as hybrid nouns), we formed two experimental situations where, based on (1) the distribution of the targets and controllers of congruence and (2) the type of grammatical agreement by gender, one situation could be specified as the one in which the referential gender was determined, and the other one as the one in which the referential gender was not specified. In addition to theoretical assertions, the use of agreement by feminine (grammatical) gender (the one in which the referential gender is not specified) was determined by a questionnaire ($N=30$) in the pilot study.

We conducted a Self-Paced Reading Task on monolingual (from the point of view of language acquisition) speakers of the Serbian language ($N=60$), whose results ($F_1(1, 118) = 0.009, p = .92, F_2(1, 32) = .02, p = .89$) showed that the cognitive system of the speakers of the Serbian language is not sensitive to the differences between the two experimental situations. In order to check this, the experimental situations were compared in a study with a stricter control over new subjects ($N=45$), using a more sensitive statistical analysis of linear mixed effects ($\beta = -4.832e^{-02}$; $SE_{\beta} = 3.835e^{-02}$; $t = -1.26$; $Pr(>|t|) = .23$).

Since the results of both experiments coincided, we can assert with a greater certainty that referential gender is not a significant predictor in the process of language comprehension in Serbian. This could be explained by the rich inflectional morphology of the Serbian language, which enables language information comprehension at the formal level, so the recipient in certain situations does not need to seek additional semantic information.

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How Exceptional Are Embedded Accusative Subjects

Aniko Kovač (Saarland University/University of Novi Sad)

In English, it is assumed that exceptional case-marking (ECM) takes place because of the impossibility of a non-finite T head in the subordinate clause to check the case feature of its subject, resulting in it having its case-feature valued by the verb of the superordinate clause (Chomsky, 1981). However, in other languages, phenomena involving the assignment of accusative case to the subject of a subordinate clause have been noted in finite contexts as well (e.g. Pratt (2009) for Greek; É. Kiss (2004) for Hungarian; Kuno (1976) and Kobayashi & Maki (2002) for Japanese).

I propose a reanalysis of ECM in English that does not postulate the "exceptionality" of accusative case-assignment. Drawing on data from the long distance extraction of subjects in Hungarian, I propose that this type of case assignment relies on the existing mechanisms of agreement and feature checking/valuation, treating instances of ECM as part of a cross-linguistically generalizable mechanism of cross-clausal case assignment reliant on two criteria: (i) the availability of an unchecked accusative case-feature on the matrix verb, and (ii) an unchecked/unvalued feature on the subject of the subordinate clause.

The goal is to provide a unified, cross-linguistically generalizable analysis of accusative case-assignment to the subject of a subordinate clause in both finite and non-finite contexts, as well as to answer some of the open questions concerning the mechanisms involved in the occurrence of ECM phenomena and cross-clausal accusative case assignment, such as the structure of the subordinate clause, the position of the embedded subject, the features of the verb of the superordinate clause and the question of its valency, the mechanism of accusative case-assignment, motivating the assignment to a constituent of a different clause, the lexical determinateness of the process, as well as the cross-linguistic generalizability of existing analyses.

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Case, aspect and theta roles with psych verbs in Serbian

Peđa Kovačević (University of Novi Sad)

Landau (2010) divides the category of psych into three subclasses (i) CLASS I - *love*-type verbs or stative transitives with the accusative-marked argument carrying inherent case; (ii) CLASS II - *please*-type verbs or eventive causatives (with the availability of a habitual, stative interpretations) containing the accusative assigning *v*; and (iii) CLASS III - *appeal*-type verbs or statives that do not assign accusative case and the dative on the experiencer is inherent.

The Serbian data yields the following typical cases:

- (1) a. Jovan voli Anu.
John.NOM loves Ann.ACC
"John loves Ann"
- b. Jovana boli glava.
John.ACC aches head.NOM
"John' has a headache"
- c. Jovana je zbolela glava.
John.ACC AUX hurt head.NOM
"John got a headache"
- d. Jovanu prija čaj.
John.DAT appeal tea.NOM
"The tea appeals to John"

Examples like (1a) and (1d) correspond to CLASS I and CLASS III respectively without major incongruities. Sentences like (1c) have an eventive denotation and the verb is clearly causative as evidenced by its bimorphemic structure (cf. Pesetsky 1994). Cases like (1b) appear structurally similar to CLASS II (accusative marked experiencer & nominative marked causer) but semantically they are stative and the verb is monomorphemic as in CLASS III.

I will assume Landau's (2010) classification accommodates (1a) and (1c) but fails to account for the anomalous behavior of (1b) - a monomorphemic stative verb with nominative and accusative arguments. We can account for (2b) by departing from the assumption that only causatives project vP because they are bi-eventive (Pylkkänen 2008). Drawing on Neeleman and De Koot (2012), I will assume that accusative case is not assigned by a causative little *v*. These authors propose that CAUSE is not a primitive of verbal semantics suggesting instead that verbal semantics incorporates a component that introduces the *crucial contributing factor* (CCF). This enables them to account for the reason why accusative is present in many stative predicates (2) and why these sentences can be passivized to produce stative passives.

- (2) The wall protected the city.

The projection introducing the CCF argument is responsible for the assignment of accusative in (2). I show that (1b) is different from (1d) in that the nominative marked argument in (1b) has the CCF semantics while the nominative marked argument in (1d) does not, which explains the difference between the two structures. (1b), thus, becomes a stative special case of CLASS II.

References

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Multimodal reference processing: gaze-following and cognitive effort

Mirjana Sekicki & Maria Staudte (Saarland University)

Previous research reports a facilitatory effect of referential gaze cue on language processing, by showing that such a cue, presented prior to referring to the target object, induces a shift in visual attention, and aids performance on subsequent tasks (e.g. Hanna & Brennan, 2007). The opportunity to employ a robust pupillary measure (the Index of Cognitive Activity; Marshall, 2000), while simultaneously tracking unconstrained eye-movements, inspired our attempt to quantify this gaze effect online, as it appears. We hypothesized a distribution of cognitive effort during a sentence, where the reduced effort on the referent noun would be preceded by its increase on the gaze cue (see Figure 1).

First, we conducted a series of experiments manipulating the information contributed by the gaze cue in a *qualitative* manner, that is, by manipulating the fit of the cued object to the prior or subsequent linguistic context. We found that the referential gaze cue led to a reduction of effort on the referent noun, even when the target did not fit the previous linguistic context. However, noting and following the gaze cue to a possible target object proved to be effortless, even when another object was preferred. Immediate cognitive effort on the cue was induced only when the target object was anomalous, that is, when it did not fit the previous linguistic context.

In addition, we manipulated the information contributed by the gaze cue in a *quantitative* manner, by varying gaze specificity. From eleven plausible targets in the visual scene, the referential gaze cued: a) one object; b) a group of three; or c) a group of five objects, thus reducing the scene entropy a) abruptly (from 11 to 1 object); b) significantly (from 11 to 3 objects); or c) moderately (from 11 to 5 objects). Again, we found no immediate effect on the gaze cue, but a graded modulation of cognitive effort on the reference. The same referent noun induced the least effort in *GazeToOne* condition; more in the *GazeToThree*, and the most effort in *GazeToFive* condition.

In sum, we find no evidence of the distribution of cognitive effort between the gaze cue and the referent noun. The talk will address potential interpretations of the findings, as well as further outlooks.

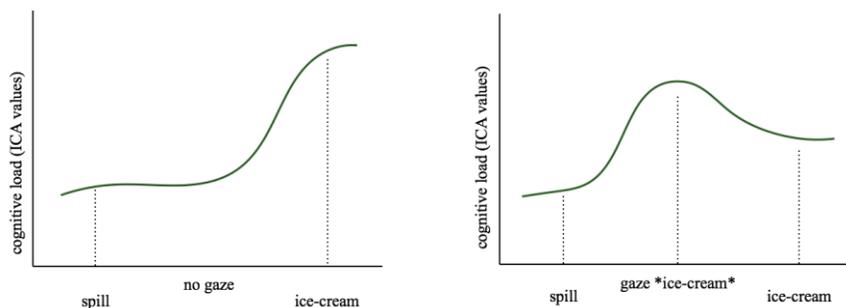


Figure 1. Distribution of cognitive effort between the verb and the (dispreferred but plausible) referent noun - without the referential gaze cue (left), and with the gaze cue to the target object (right).

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How bilinguals deal with Serbian possessives: their structural positions and binding

Sanja Srdanović (Goethe University Frankfurt)

A pronoun and an R-expression cannot co-refer in Serbian. Sentences such as '*Sunđerbobovi najdraži puž gai je ugrizao.*' ('Spongebobi's favourite snail has bitten himi.') and 'Spongebobi Lieblinsschnecke hat ihni_{i/j} gebissen.' and '*Njegovi omiljeni puž je ugrizao Sunđerbobai.*' ('His favourite snail has bitten Spongebobi.') and 'Seine_{i/j} Lieblingsschnecke hat Spongebobi gebissen.') seem to exhibit different behavior cross-linguistically. Namely, coreference is acceptable in English, not acceptable in Serbian, but possible (ambiguous) in German.

A possible explanation for Serbian, in favour of the no-DP analysis, would be that the possessor is NP-adjoined. According to Despić (2011), Bošković (2008, 2012) Serbian lacks a DP, the possessor c-commands out of the NP and therefore, it causes the violation of binding principles B and C. Moreover, demonstratives and adjectives that precede a possessor (e.g. *ovaj*, 'this', *mnogi*, 'many') do not constrain its c-command domain, under the assumption that they are also NP-adjoined. Despić (2011) and Bošković (2012) argue that this is a strong piece of evidence that demonstratives, possessives and adjectives that agree with the noun should be treated as multiple adjuncts or multiple Specs of the same position.

LaTerza (2016) provides two arguments against Despić's (2011) analysis: (1) embedded possessives should not cause the co-referential constraints that are observed in the unembedded cases and (2) Bulgarian and Macedonian as DP languages should pattern with English. However, the same constraints are observed with unembedded possessives, and DP languages like Bulgarian and Macedonian pattern with Serbian. It is assumed that these binding differences are not due to NP/DP distinctions, but that some properties of Serbian (Bulgarian and Macedonian) possessives might be responsible for the non-coreference. They seem to behave as if they occupied a very high c-commanding position in the nominal, even when their surface position is embedded (LaTerza, 2016). She follows Szabolcsi's (1983) analysis of Hungarian dative possessors, which under certain conditions can raise to an edge position within their nominals. Similarly, it might be supposed that Serbian (Bulgarian and Macedonian) postnominal possessors uniformly raise at LF to the edge of their largest containing nominal, from where they might c-command the rest of the clause (LaTerza, 2016).

Although there are various proposals to this matter, it is still not clear what the cause of these cross-linguistic differences is. I would like to investigate whether these Serbian structures are challenging for bilinguals, more precisely, whether they are acceptable for Serbian heritage speakers whose dominant language is German, since such structures are ambiguous in German. The participants will be given a Truth Value Judgement task and they should determine whether the given sentences accurately described the given pictures. This research would tell us more about how bilinguals deal with specific cross-linguistic differences. At the same time, it might shed some light on the disputable structure of Serbian nominal phrases, the position of possessives and their binding possibilities.

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Non-eventive nominals in Serbian: theoretical and empirical perspective

Anja Šarić¹, Isidora Gatarić² & Sanja Srdanović¹ (¹Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main,
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Deverbal nominals in English can be divided into three categories: i) *simple event nominals* (SENs); ii) *complex event nominals* (CENs); and iii) *result nominals* (RNs) (Grimshaw, 1990). SENs in English fall into a category in-between CENs and RNs, since they share features of both. However, unlike CENs, which have obligatory arguments, SENs do not take arguments (Grimshaw, 1990). Interestingly, according to Zlatić (1997), Serbian CENs formed out of detransitivized verbs can appear with no arguments at all. To the best of our knowledge, there are no previous theoretical or empirical studies dealing with the differences between SENs and CENs in Serbian. In this study, we investigated the notion and relevance of the category of SENs in Serbian from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. In the first part of the study, we applied the morpho-syntactic test (Roy & Soare, 2012) to the stimuli in order to discriminate between event nominals and other types of nominals. Based on these results, the stimuli were selected for the experimental part of the study, which was administered in a form of a self-paced reading task. The self-paced reading task included pairs of sentences with deverbal nominals divided into CENs and SENs, with the additional variation in the presence/absence of the obligatory argument. The obtained data were analyzed with the *Generalized Additive Mixed Models* (GAMM) (Wood, 2006). The final model showed that there are no significant differences in the processing of SENs and CENs. Moreover, the results also showed that the presence of the obligatory argument does not significantly affect sentence processing. The obtained results suggest that the third category of deverbal nominals in Serbian, the eventive one, is not relevant in this language, unlike in English. However, since this study was designed as a pilot research, the interpretation of the obtained results should be treated with caution. For more conclusive results further research is needed.

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The grammatical nature of *može* in Serbian

Aleksandar Živanović (University of Novi Sad)

In this talk, I will discuss the use of *može* (can 3rdSg.Pres) in Serbian, which displays behaviour unusual for modal verbs. In informal and semi-formal contexts, the speaker can use *može* to convey his or her opinion even though the verb is in the third person present tense (which is not the possibility with other modal verbs). I propose that it is possible to distinguish two broad contexts in which *može* can be used: (1) when expressing agreement with the proposition (Holmberg (2015) identifies this function of *yes* by using the term 'rejoinder' (Halliday & Hasan 1976)): - *Idemo u grad.* (Let's go out.) - *Može!* (Okay!). - *Zvaću te sutra.* (I'll call you tomorrow.) - *Može.* (All right.); (2) when choosing one of two (or more) alternatives: - *Mogu li da uđem?* (May I come in?) - *Može/Ne može.* (Yes, you may./You may not.); - *Hoćeš kafu ili čaj?* (You want coffee or tea?) - *Može kafa.* (I want coffee.). *Može* in (1) cannot be negated, nor followed by an argument. For this reason, it is possible to analyze it as a particle. *Može* in (2) can be negated and modified by an argument. The proposed syntactic structure involves ellipsis of the clause including an impersonal construction: e.g. *može [se ući]* (it is possible to come in).

Selected references:

- Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
Holmberg, A. (2015). *The syntax of yes and no*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.