

PHRASE STRUCTURE PATTERNING AND LICENSING
FOR ENGLISH AND SERBIAN
SPEAKER-ORIENTED ADVERB SUBCLASSES

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Abstract: *This paper attempts to set phrase structure rules for English and Serbian speaker-oriented adverb subclasses. Adverbs are looked at here as specifiers licensed by the semantic feature [ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE]. The results suggest that illocutionary, evaluative and evidential adverbs normally merge within the complementizer layer and the inflectional layer, and that English epistemic adverbs are in most cases preferably integrated into the inflectional layer, whereas Serbian epistemic adverbs tend to occur in the sentence-initial position.*

Keywords: *speaker-oriented adverbs in English and Serbian, their distribution and semantics, the functional specifier analysis and head feature licensing approach*

1. Introduction

The issue of adverb patterning and licensing has been closely analysed in linguistic theory basically within the framework of two distinct types of analysis of the interplay between adverb syntax and semantics. Proponents of the functional specifier analysis (cf. Laenzlinger 1996, 1998; Alexiadou 1997; Cinque 1999, 2004, among others) state that syntax determines semantics, whereas proponents of the adjunction approach (cf. Frey and Pittner 1999; Haider 2000, 2004; Ernst 2000, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, for instance) believe that semantics determines syntax. Linguists also differently explain the integration of adverbs into clause structure. If adverbs have argument status, they are considered to be complements. McConnell-Ginet (1982), Larson (1988) and Alexiadou (1997) analyse temporal, spatial, manner and completion adverbs as complements. Chomsky (1986:6) maintains that adjunction is possible only to a nonargument. Ernst (2002:67) shows, for example, that manner adverbs can merge into syntax as VP adjuncts if placed on a left-branch. Degree elements, quantifiers and negative constituents have been recategorized as functional heads. Rakowski and Travis (2000) view postverbal adverbs as functional heads (e.g. *She could investigate no longer*). Kayne (1994) illustrates that adverbs can integrate into syntactic structure as complements or specifiers. Cinque (1999) establishes canonical order of adverbs and claims that they merge into syntax as unique specifiers of designated functional projections. As speaker-oriented adverbs specify the whole proposition, they will be looked at in this paper as specifiers.

The main research objective of this study is to reveal structure patterning and licensing for speaker-oriented adverbs, *i.e.* their subclasses – illocutionary adverbs, evaluative adverbs, evidential adverbs and epistemic adverbs, and their base positions in the two languages under scrutiny. We assume that this investigation will help us establish phrase structure rules for

English and Serbian speaker-oriented adverb subclasses, and better understand the interplay between adverb syntax and semantics. The analysis is expected to show that adverb distribution in Serbian is more flexible than in English, and that English and Serbian adverbs do not basically overlap structurally. The theoretical concepts and key terms employed will be defined in the following sections.

2. Corpus, Method and Analysis

The corpus of this study is mainly built from English examples extracted from the BNC. Examples in English were selected based on speaker-oriented adverb positions in syntactic structure. Sentences in Serbian are translations of English examples.

The functional specifier analysis (see Cinque 1999; Haumann 2007) and head feature licensing approach (see Travis 1988) are employed to consider the interplay between adverb syntax and semantics. Throughout this paper, it has been assumed that each functional projection has its own specific semantic interpretation, and that adverbs enter into transparent semantic relations with the head of the functional projection they occur in. (For more details see Cinque 1999).

The starting point of the analysis is that adverbs have phrasal status. In accordance with this, certain abbreviations are used in the text. Some of them are specForce(Fin)P, which stands for specifier Force (Finite) Phrase, specEvalP – specifier Evaluative Phrase, specEvidP – specifier Evidential Phrase, IP – Inflection Phrase, where Inflection is the sentence, ForceP – Force Phrase, which hosts illocutionary adverbs, EvalP – Evaluative Phrase, where evaluative adverbs sit, EvidP – Evidential Phrase, into which evidential adverbs are merged, EpiP – Epistemic Phrase, where epistemic adverbs occur, CP – Complementizer Phrase, NegP – sentence-negating phrase, etc. The phrases ForceP, EvalP, EvidP and EpiP represent, thus, the licensing sites of adverbs, with adverbs entering into a transparent semantic relationship with their licensing functional heads.

Co-occurrences of adverbs are not explored here, though they certainly deserve thorough examination to help us better understand adverb licensing (see, for instance, Cinque 1999, 2004; Ernst 2002; Haumann 2007; Dimković-Telebaković 2011; Dimković-Telebaković 2013; Dimković-Telebaković 2015).

In Section 2.1, we discuss different speaker-oriented adverb subclasses. The results of the investigation presented in this paper are summarised in Section 3.

2.1. Speaker-oriented Adverbs and Their Patterning in English and Serbian

Speaker-oriented adverbs have received this label because they express the speaker's attitude to the event denoted by the sentence (cf. Jackendoff 1972:56). They are also called pragmatic adverbs (cf. Bellert 1977:349) or stance adverbs (see Biber et al. 1999). As speaker-oriented adverbs are syntactically and semantically heterogeneous, we follow Bellert's (1977:341ff.) classification mainly based on semantic criteria, and examine a number of illocutionary adverbs, evaluative adverbs, evidential adverbs and epistemic adverbs here. The strings below show that speaker-oriented adverbs are licensed by the semantic feature [ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE] (cf. Travis 1988:290), and how they may pattern in English and Serbian.

2.1.1. Illocutionary Adverbs

Bellert (1977:349ff.) maintains that illocutionary adverbs either specify the content of the proposition (e.g. *honestly*, *frankly* – *honestly*-type adverbs) or the way in which it is expressed, i.e. the form (e.g. *briefly*, *roughly* – *briefly*-type adverbs). To corroborate the assumption that illocutionary adverbs sit in specForce(Fin)P and are licensed under specifier-head agreement, Haumann (2007:339) illustrates that they fail to occur within the scope of relative operators (e.g. **On the way down I fell over a man hiding in a dark corner, who roughly ran away immediately*), conditional operators (e.g. **Had she not been so downhearted briefly Ruth would have enjoyed herself*) and interrogative operators (e.g. **I wonder if frankly that would have helped*). These examples show that illocutionary adverbs depend on Force-related features, and that can be analysed as assertive operators.

Sentences (1e) and (1s a, b) demonstrate that the illocutionary adverbs (ForceP) *frankly*/*iskreno*, *otvoreno* may be used in the sentence-initial position, i.e. specForce(Fin)P. If this is the case, it is significant to say that Serbian sentence patterning allows the subject omission, as shown in (1s b), (2s b), (3s b), (4s b), (5s b) and (9s b), whereas English structure patterning does not.

- (1e) *Frankly*, I don't have much faith in the aunt.
 IP → ForceP – NP – AuxP – V – NP – PP
 (1s) a. *Iskreno / Da kažem otvoreno*, ja nemam mnogo poverenja u tetku.
 IP → ForceP / ForceP – NP – V – NP – PP
 (1s) b. *Iskreno / Da kažem otvoreno*, nemam mnogo poverenja u tetku.
 IP → ForceP / ForceP – V – NP – PP

In sentence (2e), *frankly* assumes the post-subject position, while *otvoreno* in example (2s a) occurs within the inflectional layer, and in (2s b) in the front sentence position.

- (2e) He *frankly* admitted to being obsessed with her sex ...
 IP → NP – ForceP – V – VP – PP
 (2s) a. On je *otvoreno* priznao da je opsednut njenom privlačnošću ...
 IP → NP – AuxP – ForceP – V – VP – NP
 (2s) b. *Otvoreno* je priznao da je opsednut njenom privlačnošću ...
 IP → ForceP – AuxP – V – VP – NP

Frankly can also appear after the finite non-lexical verb, as in (3e). The adverbs *neskriveno* and *iskreno* are realized within the inflectional layer too, which is illustrated by (3s a, b). Sentence (3e) has two meanings here, since *frankly baffled* may be translated as *neskriveno osujećen* or *iskreno zbunjen*. Example (3s b) *Bio je iskreno zbunjen* shows that if a sentence contains no subject it can open with a verb in Serbian. Further investigation into adverbs in this paper will demonstrate that Serbian typically patterns in this way.

- (3e) He was *frankly* baffled ...
 IP → NP – AuxP – ForceP – V –
 (3s) a. On je bio *neskriveno* osujećen ...
 IP → NP – AuxP – V – ForceP –
 (3s) b. Bio je *iskreno* zbunjen ...
 IP → V – AuxP – ForceP –

In strings (4e) and (4s a, b), we show that these illocutionary adverbs may follow the finite non-lexical verb, and have different structure patterning in the two languages.

- (4e) They can *frankly* ask him for a favour.
 IP → NP – AuxP – ForceP – V – NP – PP
 (4s) a. Oni ga mogu *otvoreno* zamoliti za uslugu.
 IP → NP – NP – AuxP – ForceP – V – PP
 (4s) b. Mogu ga *otvoreno* zamoliti za uslugu.
 IP → AuxP – NP – ForceP – V – PP

If we compare examples (2e) and (4e) with Haumann's (2007:342f.) examples, containing subject-oriented adverbs and subject-attitude adverbs, we can see that Haumann is right in claiming that *frankly*-type illocutionary adverbs, i.e. *honestly*-type illocutionary adverbs, overlap with subject-oriented adverbs and subject-attitude adverbs. This comparison confirms Haumann's findings and shows that it is not easy to identify base positions for different adverb subclasses, since they may overlap.

Strings (5e) and (5s a, b) illustrate that *frankly*-type illocutionary adverbs may be found in the final-sentence position too, but we must point out that sentence (5s b) sounds more natural in Serbian than (5s a). In contrast, sentence (5e) shows that English does not allow structure patterning which excludes the subject of the sentence.

- (5e) I can tell you quite *frankly*.
 IP → NP – AuxP – V – NP – ForceP
 (5s) a. Ja ti mogu reći sasvim *otvoreno*.
 IP → NP – NP – AuxP – V – ForceP
 (5s) b. Mogu ti reći sasvim *otvoreno*.
 IP → AuxP – NP – V – ForceP

Examples (6e) and (6s a, b) contain the illocutionary adverbs *honestly* and *iskreno*. These sequences show that the adverbs may assume the initial sentence position when they precede focalized expressions, but cannot follow such expressions. Haumann (2007:340) also provides evidence to support this claim, and illustrates that illocutionary adverbs cannot follow topicalized constituents, but can precede them. This confirms her assumption that illocutionary adverbs are inmates of specForce(Fin)P. Sentences (6s a, b), on the other hand, demonstrate that Serbian has different sentence patterning than English in cases when the illocutionary adverb *iskreno* is followed by focalized expression.

- (6e) *Honestly*, HIS MONEY (**honestly*) you should have asked for, not his car.
 IP → ForceP – NP – (**ForceP*) – NP – AuxP – AuxP – VP – NP
 (6s) a. *Iskreno*, trebalo je da tražiš NJEGOVO NOVAC (**iskreno*), ne njegova kola.
 IP → ForceP – VP – V – NP – (**ForceP*) – NP
 (6s) b. *Iskreno*, bolje da si mu tržila NOVAC (**iskreno*), a ne kola.
 IP → ForceP – VP – NP – V – NP – (**ForceP*) – NP

Honestly/iskreno may occur in post-subject position too, that is, within the complementizer layer, as in (7e) and (7s), or may follow the finite non-lexical verb, which is a clear case of its realization within the inflectional layer, as shown in (8e) and (8s). Sentences (7e) and (7s) demonstrate that English and Serbian structure patterns may occasionally overlap.

- (7e) He *honestly* believes that you are his friend.
 IP → NP – ForceP – V – CP
 (7s) On *iskreno* veruje da si mu prijatelj.

IP → NP – ForceP – V – CP

(8e) He had never invited anyone to dinner at the house, for the simple reason
that they never had anything he could *honestly* call dinner.

IP → Clause – NP– AuxP – ForceP – V – NP

(8s) On nikada nije nikoga pozvao u kuću na večeru iz jednostavnog razloga jer
nikada nisu imali nešto što bi (on) mogao *iskreno* da nazove večerom.

IP → Clause – AuxP–(NP)– AuxP – ForceP – V – NP

Example (9e) illustrates that the illocutionary adverb *honestly* may occupy a postverbal position in English, whereas sentences (9s a, b) show that the adverb *iskreno* cannot assume this position in Serbian but may occur either in the post-subject position or the front sentence position. Limitations in adverb placement in different languages impose close consideration of adverb constraints in languages, because they help us specify the base positions of certain adverb subclasses. Examples (9s a, b) therefore demonstrate that, in Serbian, typical positions for the illocutionary adverb are within the complementizer layer. Analysing distributional ranges of *briefly*-type adverbs and *honestly*-type adverbs, Haumann (2007:341) concludes that the distributional range of *briefly*-type adverbs is narrower than that of *honestly*-type adverbs, and that *briefly* is banned from positions lower than NegP (e.g. **They hadn't briefly been entertaining this stupid idea*) and nonfinite non-lexical verbs (e.g. **They will have seriously been (seriously) claiming that ...*). These examples prove that illocutionary adverbs have the status of assertive operators which are inmates of the complementizer layer and which take scope over the entire proposition. Examples (9s a, b) support this claim for Serbian illocutionary adverb *iskreno*. To explain how English illocutionary adverbs are realized in postverbal position, Haumann (2007:341) maintains that they merge within empty VP structure, where they are licensed by forming a representational chain with the expletive assertion operator in specForce(Fin)P. She also shows later in her 2007 book that the empty VP structure may be applied to all speaker-oriented adverb subclasses which assume the final sentence-position.

(9e) I believe this is the shape of movie future, *honestly*.

IP → NP – V – CP – ForceP

(9s) a. Ja *iskreno* verujem da je ovo pravi oblik budućeg filma, **iskreno*.

IP → NP – ForceP – V – CP – *ForceP

(9s) b. *Iskreno* verujem da je ovo pravi oblik budućeg filma, **iskreno*.

IP → ForceP – V – CP – *ForceP

2.1.2. Evaluative Adverbs

Palmer (1968:12ff) and Ernst (2002:76) state that the speaker uses evaluative adverbs to evaluate a given state of affairs with respect to her/his standards. Haumann (2007:346f.) specifies constraints of evaluative adverbs. She shows that they are barred from occurring within the scope of interrogative operators (e.g. **Can he luckily take a joke?*), counterfactual operators (e.g. **Had he had more self-esteem, he luckily could have taken a joke*) and sentential negation (e.g. **He cannot luckily take a joke*), as well as from following focalized constituents (e.g. *Fortunately, SO HOPELESS (*fortunately) was (*fortunately) [his] attempt at shoplifting [...] that the manager finally let him go*), and nonfinite non-lexical verbs (**You should have ideally eaten less*). Ernst (2002:100) explains that the occurrence of evaluative adverbs in these cases would mean that the speaker creates a contradiction of the truth of the proposition. As evaluative adverbs take scope over true propositions, i.e. facts, they may be called factive operators. The relation between

factivity and finiteness makes us understand that evaluative adverbs are merged as specifiers into FinP, below ForceP. To prove this, Haumann provides further evidence: evaluative adverbs occur within the scope of the declarative complementizer *that* (*I believe of course that ideally chimps should live freely ...*), after relative operators (*... she opened her new copy of the Church Times which fortunately she had in her bag*) and after topicalized constituents (*(She said that) temptation, fortunately, she could resist*) (adapted from Haumann 2007:347).

The following examples show that evaluative adverbs may assume the sentence-initial position (10e, 10s a and 13s c), the post-subject position (10s b and 11e), the position after the finite non-lexical verb (11s, 12e, 12s and 13s b) and the sentence-final position (13e and 13s a). The adverb *ideally* has been translated as *najviše* in (12s), which suggests that the semantics of English sentences containing evaluative adverbs may result in adjectives in Serbian equivalents. As for the sentence-final occurrences of English evaluative adverbs, Haumann (2007:351) claims that they are not right-adjoined but are merged into structure as the complement of an empty verbal head, V, by forming a representational chain within the factive operator in specEvalP. Examples (13s a, b, c) show that Serbian allows a more flexible adverb distribution and that the position of the adverb *nažalost* in syntactic structure does not change the meaning of the sentence. Examples (13s a, b) indicate that the adverb specifies the whole proposition, no matter whether it is placed at the beginning of the sentence or at the end of the sentence. That said, we can conclude that it is logical that the adverb is left-joined.

(10e) *Luckily*, she didn't come.

IP → EvalP – NP – VP

(10s) a. *Srećom*, ona nije došla.

IP → EvalP – NP – VP

(10s) b. Ona *srećom* nije došla.

IP → NP – EvalP – VP

(11e) They *hopefully* realized how good he was.

IP → NP – EvalP – V – CP

(11s) Oni su *srećom* shvatili koliko je on dobar.

IP → NP – AuxP – EvalP – V – CP

(12e) They might *ideally* like to go on a tour of Italy.

IP → NP – AuxP – EvalP – V – V – PP

(12s) Oni bi *možda* najviše voleli da obiđu Italiju.

IP → NP – AuxP – AuxP – V – V – NP

(13e) Tom turned up, *unfortunately*.

IP → NP – VP – EvalP

(13s) a. Tom se pojavio, *nažalost*.

IP → NP – VP – EvalP

(13s) b. Tom se *nažalost* pojavio.

IP → NP – VP – EvalP – VP

(13s) c. *Nažalost*, Tom se pojavio.

IP → EvalP – NP – VP

2.1.3. Evidential Adverbs

Evidential adverbs express degrees of certitude of the speaker's subjective perception of the truth of a proposition. The evidential adverbs (EvidP) *obviously/očito* may be placed in the

initial-sentence position in both languages, as in (14e) and (14s), though it is obvious that the rest of the sentence patterning differs in the two languages.

- (14e) *Obviously* if you are worried about someone's safety, you should dial 999.
 IP → EvidP – Clause – NP–AuxP–V–

- (14s) *Očito* je da bi, ako ste zabrinuti za nečiju bezbednost, bilo potrebno da pozovete broj 999.
 IP → EvidP–V– VP–Clause –VP – V –
 NP

In strings (15e) and (15s), the adverbs assume the post-subject position. These examples illustrate that English and Serbian can have nearly identical clause patterning with one apparent difference: in sentence (15e), the negation is over *self-control*, while in (15s) the negation is over the lexical verb.

- (15e) Pat *obviously* has no self-control.
 IP → NP – EvidP – V – NP
 (15s) Pet *očigledno* ne vlada sobom.
 IP → NP – EvidP – VP – NP

The adverbs *obviously/očigledno* may also occupy the position after the lexical verb, as shown in (16e) and (16s). These examples illustrate that English and Serbian sentences may share the same patterning.

- (16e) He is *obviously* educated.
 IP → NP – V – EvidP –
 (16s) On je *očigledno* obrazovan.
 IP → NP – V – EvidP –

Example (17e) contains the evidential adverb *surely*, placed at the end of the sentence. Haumann (2007:357) demonstrates that the evidential adverb is realized within empty structure **VP** and licensed by forming a representational chain with the expletive operator in specEvidP. In contrast, example (17s a) shows that *zaista* is barred from occurring in the final position, but can assume the position after the lexical verb, as illustrated by (17s b).

- (17e) She is only a child, *surely*.
 IP → NP–V–PrtP– NP –EvidP
 (17s) a. Ona je samo dete, **zaista*.
 IP → NP–V– PrtP–NP–*EvidP
 (17s) b. Ona je *zaista* samo dete.
 IP → NP–V–EvidP–PrtP–NP

2.1.4. Epistemic Adverbs

Biber et al. (1999:854) consider epistemic markers to be “adverbs which express the speaker’s judgment about the certainty, reliability and limitations of the proposition.” Haumann (2007:365) claims that *possibly* and *probably* “structurally, though probably not pragmatically, make perfect **VP**-inmates, and *maybe* as a head is barred from assuming a specifier position

within VP.” Our analysis presented below shows how these adverbs and their Serbian equivalents pattern.

Examples (18e) and (18s) demonstrate that the epistemic adverbs (EpiP) *possibly* and *moгуће* may assume the initial sentence position, but cause different sentence patterning in the two languages analysed.

- (18e) *Possibly*, Peter turned up.
 IP → EpiP – NP – VP
 (18s) *Moгуће* je da se Petar pojavio.
 IP → EpiP – V – VP – NP – V

Sentence (19e) illustrates that the adverb *probably* may occupy the post subject position. In (19s), the adverb *verovatno* appears in the front sentence position, although *Njima su verovatno bile potrebne glumice za tu vrstu stvari* is acceptable, where *verovatno* occurs within the inflectional layer.

- (19e) They *probably* needed actresses for that sort of thing.
 IP → NP – EpiP – VP – NP – PP
 (19s) *Verovatno* su im bile potrebne glumice za tu vrstu stvari.
 IP → EpiP – VP – NP – VP – NP – PP

Epistemic adverbs may assume the position between two auxiliaries too, as illustrated by (20e). The Serbian translation (20s) shows that *verovatno* occupies the position before the negative form of the finite non-lexical verb. Example (20s) illustrates that Serbian sentences can contain two negations.

- (20e) On reflection, none of the family could *possibly* have chosen it.
 IP → PP – NP – AuxP – (EpiP) – AuxP – V – NP
 (20s) Posle razmišljanja, niko od članova porodice *verovatno* ne bi to izabrao.
 IP → PP – NP – (EpiP) – AuxP – NP – V

The adverb *possibly* may also appear in the postverbal position, as in (21e), whereas in the equivalent Serbian translation *verovatno* occurs in the sentence-initial position, as shown in (21s), and the terminal adverb *tada* is introduced to express the exact meaning of the sentence. In other words, example (21s) suggests that semantics has an impact on syntax and that it requires the inclusion of new elements into the sentence and changes its structure to a certain degree.

- (21e) It was *possibly* the first time the BBC had had to take other equipment out of service ...
 IP → NP – V – (EpiP) – Temp – NP – AuxP – V – V – NP – PP
 (21s) *Verovatno* je BBC tada morao prvi put da uzme drugu opremu van upotrebe ...
 IP → (EpiP) – V – NP – Temp – AuxP – Temp – V – NP – PP

Examples (22e) and (22s a) show that *maybe* and *možda* are not acceptable in the final sentence position, unless they are stylistically marked. In sentence (22s b), *možda* occurs in the sentence-initial position, although it is possible to say *On će me možda posetiti*, where *možda* occurs within the inflectional layer.

- ??? (22e) He'll look me up, *maybe*.

IP → NP –AuxP– VP– NP–VP–EpiP

??? (22s) a. Posetiće me, *možda*.

IP → VP –NP –EpiP

(22s) b. *Možda* će me posetiti.

IP → EpiP – AuxP–NP–VP

Example (23e), however, illustrates that *maybe* can occupy the initial position. Its equivalent in Serbian, *možda*, also assumes this position, as shown by (23s).

(23e) *Maybe* we even passed each other in the supermarket.

(23s) *Možda* smo čak prošli jedni pored drugih u samousluži.

Maybe and *možda* preferably occur in the sentence-initial position and not in the epistemic adverb's base position within the inflectional layer, as Haumann (2007:361) also states for *maybe*. She explains that *maybe* originates as the head of EpiP and is too verbal-head-like, which helps us understand why *maybe* and *možda* act differently in syntax from other epistemic adverbs.

We would like to end this Section by pointing out that a framework for our analysis was found in Haumann's study (2007), which was built on the findings of her peers dealing with adverbs previously.

3. Conclusions

The investigation conducted in this paper suggests that all subclasses of speaker-oriented adverbs may be realized within the complementizer layer and the inflectional layer in both languages, and that only some of them may occur in postverbal position. Examples, containing the illocutionary adverb *iskreno*, the evidential adverb *zaista* and the epistemic adverbs *možda* and *maybe* in the sentence final position, demonstrate that the adverbs analysed are barred from occurring in this position. The fact that *maybe* and *možda* do not preferably occupy the epistemic adverb's base position within the inflectional layer points to the conclusion that they are too verbal-head-like and that they originate as the head of EpiP. It is therefore possible to claim that English epistemic adverbs are in most cases integrated into the inflectional layer, and Serbian epistemic adverbs tend to occur in the sentence-initial position.

Our next conclusion refers to the interplay between adverb syntax and semantics. Example (21s) suggests that semantics has an impact on syntax, since it requires the inclusion of a new element into the sentence, which changes its structure.

General conclusions, related to structural differences between the two languages under discussion, are that English and Serbian adverbs do not basically overlap structurally, although there are cases when they share the same patterning. It has been illustrated, too, that Serbian allows subject omission and two negations in a sentence, whereas English does not, and that adverb distribution in Serbian is more flexible than in English.

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