

Comparative Slavic Syntax

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The structure of the (Slavic) sentence examined through the (unconscious) knowledge native speakers have when judging the grammaticality of phrases and sentences in their language.

Class 1: Commonalities among Slavic Languages

Class 2: Main mysterious differences 1: Dropping (pronominal) subjects

Class 3: Main mysterious differences 2: Case alternations (Genitive of Negation + Numerals)

Class 4: Main mysterious differences 3: Case alternations (Predicate Case)

Class 5: Main mysterious differences 4: Multiple WH-movement

Commonalities among Slavic Languages

I. Universal commonalities

- Existence of word classes (noun, verb, preposition, adjective, adverb, conjunction, etc.)
- Existence of clause types (simple, predicative, embedded, imperative, interrogative, etc.)

Parts of speech: The basic syntactic categories.

Lexical categories:

Noun (N)	pivo, politika, student, ljubav, sintaksa beer, politics, student, love, syntax,...
Verb (V)	čitati, hteti, znati, studirati, ... read, want, know, study, ...
Adjective (A)	dobar/ra, velik(a), dug(a), zadovoljan... good, big, long, satisfied...
Preposition (P)	u, kod, o, zbog, (at/to, at, about, because of)
Adverb (Adv)	mirno, polako, sada, ... (quietly, slowly, now, ...)

Non-lexical categories: ("functional categories")

Determiner (Det)	-ta/-to/-ot (Bg), ovaj, (SC), eto (R) (article), this, this
Degree word (Deg)	suviše, bol'še, (SC / R) (more)
Qualifier (Qual)	nikad, uvek (SC) (never, always)
Auxiliary (Aux)	će (SC), budet (R), -ti ([future], [infin])
Conjunction (Conj)	ili, ali, i, a (SC) (or, but, and)
Negative (neg)	ne
Complementizer (Comp)	da (SC), što (R), že (Cz/Pol),

Question 1: Can a word belong to more than one category?

9) PP --> P NP

"Complement" = object = "sister" of any head

- 10) a. object of N: knjiga [o Kantu] (book [about Kant])
- b. object of P: o [mojem bratu] (about [my brother])
- c. object of V: pojesti [sveže meso] (to eat [fresh meat])
- d. object of A: zadovoljan [studentima] (satisfied [with the students])

The complement of the verb is the **direct object**

- 11) a. Srdjan čita [knjige]. (Srdjan reads books)
- b. Srdjan uvek čita [nove knjige o Sandri] (Srdjan always reads new books about Sandra)
- 12) a. VP --> V (NP) b. VP --> V (PP)
- a. AP --> A (NP) b. AP --> A (PP)

- Phrases (XP) consist of:
 - heads (X)
 - modifiers ("adjuncts") (adjective, PP, ...)
 - complements (objects) (YP)

II Commonalities from a common history

- "Branching direction" (to the **right**) (Japanese and others branch to the **left**)
 - Prepositional objects: *iza ugla, u Novom Sadu*
 - Verbal objects: *spevati pesme / glsdati na lunu / zavisi od nekoga*
 - Embedded clauses: *Mislim, da je Barbara luda*
 - Relative clauses: *Ovo je istorija, koju studenti ne vole*
 - Genitive nouns: *Knjiga poezije / knjiga nasego profesora*

Back to constituency...

Question 5: What does Russian **net** replace in sentences like (12)?

- 13) a. John poet pesni a Marina **net**.
(=John sings songs but Marina -- doesn't)
- b. John često poet pesni o ljubvi a Marina **net**.
(=John often sings songs about love, but Marina -- doesn't)
- b. John poterjal svoi knigi o Kante v sredu v Bostone a Marina **net**.
(=John lost his books about Kant on Wednesday in Boston but Marina didn't.)

•• so **net** is a kind of VP pronoun••

- 14) a. NP --> (Det) N' specifier level
- b. N' --> N' (PP) adjunct level
- c. N' --> N (NP) head / complement level
- 15) a. VP --> (Qual) V' specifier level
- b. V' --> V' (PP) adjunct level
- b. V' --> V (NP) head / complement level
- 16) a. AP --> (Deg) A' specifier level
- b. A' --> A (PP) head / complement level
- 17) a. PP --> (Deg) P' specifier level
- b. P' --> P NP head / complement level

18) **Specifier** = Det, Deg, Qual, etc. ("Spec")

<u>Structure of all phrases:</u>	a. $XP \rightarrow (\text{Spec}) X'$ (specifier level)
	c. $X' \rightarrow X'$ (WP) (adjunct level)
	b. $X' \rightarrow X$ (YP) (head / complement level)

Question 6: What do question words replace? *šta, ko, gde, kada?*
(NP, PP, adv,...)

Question 7: What about S? What kind of phrase is S? What is true of every S?

19) *Jovan pisati knjigu. (*John to write a book.)

• Every S has **tense** (tense = T).

- i. S = Inflection Phrase (IP)
- ii. NP = Spec of IP
- iii. TENSE = head of TP
- iv. VP = complement of T

20) $TP \rightarrow NP T$; (TP = S; T = aux) **T = "functional category"**
 $T' \rightarrow T VP$

• **The tense of the verb is marked in T**

21) a. Srdjan vole St. Petersburg. (Srdjan loves St. Petersburg)
b. Jim razume Kanta. (Jim understands Kant)
c. Nova knjiga o Kantu je iznenadila svix u Bostonu.
The new book about Kant surprised everyone in Boston.

22) a. Srdjan će voleti St. Petersburg (Srdjan will love St. Petersburg)
b. Jim će razumeti Kant (Jim will understand Kant)
c. *Jim će.

T = aux (English modals, tense markers, inflectional endings...)

Question 8: What is the structure of (23)? (Russian)

23) a. Ja znaju, što Kant čitaet knigi o poezii.
I know [that [Kant reads books about poetry]].
b. Novaya knjiga o Kante govorit, što Kant čitaet knigi o poezii.
The new book about Kant says [that [Kant read books about poetry]].

24) new V' rule:

- a. $V' \rightarrow V$ (NP) **or**
- b. $V' \rightarrow V$ (S*)

25) S* rule:

$S^* \rightarrow \text{Comp} + S$ (=Comp + TP)

26) $S^* = \text{CompP} = \text{CP}$ (another **functional category**)

27) a. $V' \rightarrow V \text{ CP}$
b. $C' \rightarrow \text{Comp TP}$

Question 9: Can other categories take CP?

- 28) a. I like {the idea [that [Matisse always sleeps]] }.
b. I am {sure [that [Matisse is a good cat] }
c. Let's talk {about [whether [Matisse eats too much]] }.
- 29) a. N' --> (Det) N CP
b. A' --> (Deg) A CP
c. P' --> (Deg) P CP

• Recursion "Infinite use of finite means" • Embedding

- 30) a. The big, red, ugly, useless, nasty, disgusting, imported, rotting, ..., apple
b. This is the boy who found the cat who ate the mouse who swallowed the fly who...

Question 10: What kinds of sentences can our system **not** create?

- 31) a. The little kitten from Pskov came to St. Petersburg.
b. My friend thinks that his cat and my dog should be friends.

Question 11: Can you draw the structure for the following sentences?

- A. *Moi novye druž'ja znajut, što slavjane govorjat na krasivyx jazykax.* (Russian)
My new friends know, that Slavs speak (in) beautiful languages
- B. *Moj prijatelj iz Novog Sada je izgubio svoju knjigu o Kantu u petak u Bostonu.* (SC)
My friend from Novi Sad has lost his book about Kant on Friday in Boston.
- C. *Zadovoljni novim studentima profesor će pisati nove knjige o Kantu* (SC)
(The) satisfied (with) (the) new students professor will write new books about Kant

Other commonalities from a common history:

• **Inflectional** language type

- 30) a. I run / he runs ja begaju, on begaet
b. tables / tables stol / stoly
c. she **is going** to the store. ona idet v magazin
d. **We know them** and **they** know **us** my znaem ix, a oni znajut nas

--NOT **isolating**:

- 31) Chinese: *wo mai juzi chi*
I buy orange eat = "I bought some oranges to eat"

--NOT **agglutinative**:

- 32) Swahili: *(mimi) ninakupenda (wewe)*
me I-present-you-love you = "I love you"

• Subject/verb agreement; NO object/verb agreement

- 33) a. ja idem / ona ide / mi idemo
b. Citam knjigu / citam zurnal

• "Nominative/accusative" case system (NOT "ergative")

- 34) a. Sandra vole Srdjana (transitive)
b. Srdjan spava (intransitive)
c. Sandra ga poznaje i on jej poznaje.

• **Movement**: (in Questions, Relative clauses, other contexts)