

Some Important Arguments for a Moraic Trochee in Serbian

1. In this paper I present some arguments for a moraic trochee in Serbian.¹ In view of accents one can distinguish five main kinds of suffixes in Serbian: cyclic, receptive, extracyclic, extrametrical and dominant (s. author 1991a, 1991b, 1992, 1996). The cyclic and extrametrical suffixes are defined similarly as in English, although the suffixes which I dubbed “extrametrical” may change the rising accents from the last syllable of the stem (e.g. *sluga* ‘servant’ - *sluškinja* fem., *begúnac* ‘fugitive’ – *bègūncād* coll.) because in Serbian rising accents are assumed to extend over two syllables. The so called “receptive” suffixes has a special property to change the accents of the derivations only if the last syllable of a stem contains an unaccented length. As in English, the main accent in Serbian may fall on the penult or on the antepenult, but the penult is preferred if the final syllable is heavy; if the final syllable and the penult are light, the antepenult is preferred in trisyllabic words, but in bisyllabic words the penult is accented. For the notion of extrametricality one can stipulate that the last heavy syllable in Serbian is counted as light, and that the last light syllable is extrametrical. This definition works nicely for cyclic suffixes and monomorphemic word as we can see in examples (1):

In (1a,b, e), the suffixes end in a heavy syllable, and the accent falls on the penult; in (1c) the penult is light and the accent falls on the antepenult; in (1d) the penult is heavy and the accent falls on it. In (f), the nouns are bisyllabic, and the accent falls on the penult. The extrametricality does not apply to monomorphemic disyllabic nouns like *žèna* and *vòda* nor to the nouns derived by bisyllabic suffixes bearing a short rising accent on their initial syllable (e.g. *dvoràna* ‘hall’, *čistòća* ‘cleanliness’). To these words we can also add some trisyllabic nouns, mostly foreign borrowings (*adrèsa* ‘address’, *aždàja* ‘dragon’, *debàta* ‘debate’, etc.) For these words no assumption of extrametricality is necessary at all. Secondly, some trisyllabic foreign borrowings do not comply with the accent rule: they have the rising accent on the antepenult although the final syllable is heavy (*àzimut* ‘azimuth’, *èpiskop* ‘bishop’, *kàluđer* ‘monk’, etc.). As in some similar words in Polish, the last syllable must be made extrametrical in these foreign borrowings.

It is possible to show that the same procedure is applicable to the receptive suffixes. The receptive and extrametrical suffixes can be interpreted as “grammatical” suffixes whose primary function is to change “the morphological and syntactic property of words” (Klajn 2003: 8). These suffixes “copy” the accents prevailing in declinations demonstrating a kind of paradigmatic identity. The cyclic suffixes usually introduce more radical change of the structure and meaning; many of them apply to verbal bases which have very different accents in conjugations – in such case paradigmatic identity is in principle impossible. The given rules do not prevent the contrastive effects of receptive suffixes which have been found by Peco (1991: 100). For example, in (2) the possessive adjectives *Mášina* and *Médina* derived by the receptive suffix *-ina*, the accent of the base is preserved, while the accents of the monomorphemic nouns *mašina* and *Medina* are derived by the rule. We should add that the contrastive rising accents are possible only in derived words.

2. The strongest argument for the trochaic character of the foot in Serbian seems to appear in word formation where we find several processes of trochaic shortening. In (3a) the length of the suffix *-ān* is shortened if the rising accent precedes (s. author 2005), in (3b) in the conversion of verbs into nouns, the underlying verbal length is shortened in nouns (s. author 1999). Similar shortenings we find in the compounding (3c,d,e) where the length of the second constituent is shortened following the rising accent in the preceding syllable(s. author 1998, 2004). Finally, in (6f) the stem of the verb is truncated so that the foot is formed at the right edge of the word (s. author 2007, McCarthy, J. and A. Prince 1995).

The view of Neoštokavian accents expressed in this paper is very different from the dominant one according to which the rising accents may take any position in the word except the last one (Lehiste and Ivić 1986). It is not difficult to show that the rising accent is generally limited to the penult and antepenult in monomorphemic nouns. The accent further left than the antepenult is the result of affixation and compounding. However, in declension of nouns there remain some problem for the view expressed in this abstract which should be addressed in future investigations.

¹ As I consider the standard based on Neoštokavian, all I have to say holds as well for other languages derived from former Serbo-Croatian. I am primarily concerned with the position of the rising accents because the falling accents surface redundantly on the first syllable.

- (1a) vèžbāč 'gymnast', gubitāš 'looser', glùpān 'stupid person', làžōv 'liar';
 (b) majmùnluk 'bad behaviour', crtež 'drawing', rivalitet 'rivalry';
 (c) pepèljara 'ashtray', garàvuša 'brunette', babètina 'old, ugly woman';
 (d) aléja 'arborescent walk', améba 'amoeba', baláda 'ballad', olúja 'storm';
 (e) jèlen 'deer', bìser 'pearl', tèret 'load', ùnuk 'grandson', žìvot 'life';
 (f) žèna 'woman', vòda 'water', tèle 'calf', sèstra 'sister'
- (2) Mášina poss. adj. 'Maša's' – mašina n. 'engine',
 Médina poss. adj. 'Medo's' – Medina n. 'a town in Arabia'
- (3a) gra%đāni 'citizen', bra%đāni 'highlanders' vs. čòbani 'shepherd', Mlèčani pl. (hist) 'inhabitants of Venice';
 (b) dòdir 'touch' < dodírnuti 'to touch', pòpis 'list' < popíati 'to list';
 (c) golòbrad 'beardless' < bráda 'beard', dugònos long-nosed < nòs 'nose';
 (d) *bèskraj* 'infinity' < krâj 'end', *bèzglav* 'headless' < gláva 'head', *bèzruk* 'armless' < rùka 'hand';
 (f) člankòliz < lízati 'to lick', životòpis 'biography' – písati 'to write', nogòstup 'tread' < stúpati 'step on sth.';
 (g) mesòzder 'carnivore' < ždèrati 'to gulp', mišòmor 'rat poison' < mòriti 'to torment', nebòder 'skyscraper' < dèrati 'to tear'.

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