

Aspect-sensitive VP-ellipsis in Serbian

In this paper I show that VP-ellipsis in Serbian is sensitive to aspect, because only certain aspectual mismatches between the antecedent and the elided VP (henceforth the target) allow for it. Bošković (in press) argues that ellipsis is phase-constrained and that only phases (as in argument ellipsis) and phasal complements (as in sluicing) can be elided (Bošković also shows that the two differ with respect to extraction). I argue for this approach but also show that there is an additional requirement based on Serbian VP-ellipsis: target and antecedent need to be identical in terms of a phasal status, i.e. if target is a phase, the antecedent must also be a phase; the same holds for phasal complement targets.

Restrictions on VP-ellipsis in Serbian Stjepanović (1997) observes a discrepancy in the availability of ellipsis of non-finite VPs in Serbian: ellipsis is fine with non-finite VP antecedents (1), but not with finite VP antecedents (2). Non-finite participle VP antecedents (1a,1b), and infinitival VP antecedents (1c,1d) allow for the ellipsis of either participle (1a,1d) or infinitival VP (1b,1c). However, tensed VP antecedents disallow deletion of either participle (2a) or infinitival VP (2b). Following Lasnik's (1995) approach to verbal morphology (3), Stjepanović argues that finite forms in Serbian enter the structure inflected, their inflection being featural, whereas non-finites enter bare, their inflection being affixal. If only featural, but not affixal identity is required for ellipsis, she argues, finite forms are illicit antecedents of non-finite forms (2), whereas non-finite forms are not, even with a "sloppy" identity (1b, 1d).

Empirical problems for Stjepanović's analysis Aspectual specifications of VPs are not discussed in Stjepanović (1997), and are, indeed, irrelevant for the contrast between (1) and (2), due to the aspectual identity of antecedent and the target. However, they become important in certain instances of aspectual mismatch between the antecedent and the target where the finiteness discrepancies observed above suddenly disappear. For example, when the antecedent is the imperfective counterpart of the perfective target, non-finite (4a) and finite VPs (4b) are both felicitous antecedents. Moreover, the finiteness differences noted by Stjepanović can disappear even when the antecedent and target share aspectual value. First, note that aspectual value is always specified in the verbal root in Serbian (5). In (6), the target is an underived, root perfective, while the antecedent is a derived perfective, a prefix *iz-* being added to the perfective stem, changing its lexical properties, but not the aspectual value (cf. Milićević 2004). Interestingly, ellipsis is disallowed with either non-finite (6a) or finite antecedents (6b). Since finiteness discrepancies with antecedents disappear ((4), (6)), the question arises why aspect affects ellipsis, and why there is a discrepancy between (4) and (6).

Main analysis of the role of aspect I argue that in order for ellipsis to be felicitous, the target needs to: a) be a phasal complement or a phase (Bošković *in press*); b) be phasally identical with the strict aspectual antecedent (7), i.e. either both are phasal complements or both are phases. Consider (4). Note that the imperfective is derived by adding a suffix *-va*, a common phenomenon in Slavic (see Filip 2000, Ramchand 2004 i.a). Derived imperfective is semantically vacuous, i.e. it only changes the aspectual value of its perfective counterpart, without affecting its lexical meaning. Following Borer (2005), I assume that derived imperfective is in the higher, viewpoint aspect domain, whereas underived and derived perfectives are in the lower, situation aspect domain. I argue that, in Serbian, derived imperfective is located in the AspP, whereas derived perfective prefixes are VP-internal (Travis 2010), introducing an additional VP layer on the top of the VP containing the underived perfective root (8). I also suggest that viewpoint and situational aspect are parts of two separate phasal domains, i.e. AspP and VP. I adopt a contextual approach to phases (e.g. Bobaljik and Wurmbrand 2005, Bošković 2005, den Dikken 2007), in particular a version of Bošković (in press) where the highest VP in a series of VPs is a phase. Applied to the data under consideration, this means underived perfective VP is a phase. However, when there is an additional derived perfective VP on top of it, only this higher VP counts as a phase. In (4), the target VP constitutes a phase, and its strict aspectual antecedent VP₂ is also a phase (see (9)); both prerequisites for ellipsis are met and ellipsis is correctly predicted to be allowed. Under this analysis, the derived imperfective antecedent should disallow the ellipsis of an underived perfective target (10); even though the target VP is a phase, its strict aspectual antecedent VP₁ is a complement of a phase; the lack of ellipsis here is indeed attested (11). However, a derived imperfective suffix can also be added directly to an underived perfective stem. When this form is antecedent to an underived perfective target, ellipsis is allowed (12) since both the target and its strict antecedent VP are phases (13a). Finally, we can explain the lack of ellipsis in (6): the target is a phase, but its strict antecedent VP₁ is a phasal complement; only one condition for ellipsis is met (13b).

In sum, seemingly unsystematic discrepancies in the availability of VP-ellipsis in Serbian follow straightforwardly under the analysis relying on a strict phasal identity between antecedent and the target.

- (1) a. Petar je već pobedio Mariju, ali Marko još nije ~~pobedio Mariju~~.
 Petar is already won Marija but Marko still isn't (won Marija)
 'Petar has defeated Marija, but Marko hasn't yet (defeated Marija)'
 b. Petar je pobedio Mariju a Marko neće nikad ~~pobediti Mariju~~.
 Petar is won Marija but Marko won't never (win-inf. Marija)
 'Petar has defeated Marija, but Marko never will (defeat Marija)'
 c. Petar će pobediti Mariju, a Marko neće ~~pobediti Mariju~~.
 Petar will win-inf. Marija but Marko won't (win-inf. Marija)
 'Petar will defeat Marija, although Marko won't'
 d. Petar će pobediti Mariju, iako Marko nije ~~pobedio Mariju~~.
 Petar will win-inf. Marija although Marko isn't (won Marija)
 'Petar will defeat Marija, although Marko hasn't'
 (Stjepanović 1997:300)
- (2) a. *Ivan čita knjigu, a Petar nije ~~čitao knjigu~~.
 Ivan reads book but Petar isn't (read-past.part. book)
 'Ivan is reading a book, but Petar hasn't'
 b. *Ivan čita knjigu, a Petar neće ~~čitati knjigu~~.
 Ivan reads book but Petar won't (read-inf. book)
 'Ivan is reading a book, but Petar won't'
- (3) a. Not all verbs in a language enter the derivation inflected. b. Infl is freely featural or affixal.
- (4) a. Ivan je izbacivao smeće, a Marija ni tada nije ~~izbacila smeće~~/ neće ~~izbaciti smeće~~
 Ivan is out.throw-impfv. trash and Marija nor then isn't out.thrown-pfv./won't out.throw-pfv trash
 'Ivan was taking the trash out, and Marija didn't/ won't (take the trash out) even then'
 b. Ivan izbacuje smeće, dok Marija ni tada nije ~~izbacila smeće~~/ neće ~~izbaciti smeće~~
 Ivan out.throw-impfv. trash while Marija nor then isn't out.thrown-pfv./won't out.throw-pfv trash
 'Ivan is taking the trash out, while Marija didn't/ won't (take the trash out) even then'
- (5) a. bacati 'to throw-impfv.' b. baciti 'to throw-pfv.'
- (6) a. *Ivan nije izbacio smeće pri izlasku, a ni Marija nije ~~bacila smeće~~/ neće ~~baciti smeće~~
 Ivan isn't out.throw-pfv. trash on exiting and nor Marija isn't thrown-pfv./won't throw-pfv. trash
 'Ivan didn't take the trash out when he left, and neither Marija did/ will (throw the trash)'
 b. *Ivan nikad ne izbaci smeće pri izlasku, a ni Marija nije ~~bacila smeće~~/ neće ~~baciti smeće~~
 Ivan never not out.throw-impfv. trash on exiting and nor Marija isn't thrown-pfv./won't throw-pfv. trash
 'Ivan never takes the trash out when he leaves, and neither did Marija (throw the trash)'
- (7) A strict aspectual antecedent is part of a VP antecedent that completely matches a VP target in terms of aspectual properties, both lexical and functional.
- (8) [_{AspP} -va [_{VP2} iz- [_{VP1} root perfective izbacivati 'to throw out' -impfv.
- (9) √antecedent: [_{AspP} -va [_{VP2} iz- [_{VP1} root pfv. target: [_{VP2} iz- [_{VP1} root pfv.
- (10) *antecedent: [_{AspP} -va [_{VP2} iz- [_{VP1} root pfv. target: [_{VP} root pfv.
- (11) a. *Ivan nije izbacivao smeće, a ni Marija nije ~~bacila smeće~~/ neće ~~baciti smeće~~ tada
 Ivan isn't out.thrown-impfv. trash and nor Marija isn't thrown-pfv./won't throw-pfv. trash then
 'Ivan wasn't taking the trash out, and neither Marija did/will (throw the trash) then'
 b. *Ivan nikad ne izbacuje smeće, a ni Marija nije ~~bacila smeće~~/ neće ~~baciti smeće~~ tada
 Ivan never not out.throw-impfv. trash, and nor Marija isn't thrown-pfv./won't throw-pfv. trash then
 'Ivan is never taking the trash out, and neither Marija did/will (throw the trash) then'
- (12) a. Petar je uvek pobeđivao Mariju, a Marko ni tada nije ~~pobedio Mariju~~/ neće ~~pobediti Mariju~~.
 Petar is always won-impfv. Marija and Marko nor then isn't won-pfv./won't win-pfv. Marija
 'Petar has always been defeating Marija, while Marko didn't/won't (defeat Marija) even then'
 b. Petar uvek pobeđuje Mariju, a Marko ni tada nije ~~pobedio Mariju~~/ neće ~~pobediti Mariju~~.
 Petar always wins-impfv. Marija and Marko nor then isn't won-pfv. /won't win-pfv. Marija
 'Petar is always defeating Marija, while Marko didn't/won't (defeat Marija) even then'
- (13) a. √antecedent: [_{AspP} -va [_{VP} target: [_{VP} root pfv. b. *antecedent: [_{VP2} -iz [_{VP1} target: [_{VP} root pfv.

Selected references: Borer, H. 2005. *Structuring Sense*, Vol. 2. Oxford University Press. • Bošković, Ž. In press. Now I'm a phase, now I'm not a phase: On the variability of phases with extraction and ellipsis. In *LI*. • Stjepanović, S. 1997. VP Ellipsis in a Verb Raising Language and Implications for the Condition on Formal Identity of Verbs. In *Uconn WP* 8, 287-306. • Milićević, N. 2004. The lexical and superlexical verbal prefix *iz-* and its role in the stacking of prefixes. In *Nordlyd* 32:279-300. University of Tromsø.