

## Information Structure and Serbian Split Constituents

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In this paper, I look at the information structure of Serbian split NP/PPs (illustrated in the example (1), where a verb separates the two parts of the NP (1a), and the two parts of the PP (1b)). In the literature on Slavic languages these are often investigated under the names of Left-Branch Extraction (=LBE) or split scrambling phenomena (see Ross (1967), Corver (1992), Sekerina (1997), Fanselow & Ćavar (2002), Bašić (2004), Bošković (2005), Pereltsvaig (2008), among others). Although the information structure of split NP/PP constructions received special attention in languages such as Russian (e.g. in Sekerina (1997), Mehlhorn (2001), Gouskova (2001), among others), literature on Serbian splits has been focusing almost exclusively on the syntactic side of the phenomenon, giving only insufficient analyses of the information structure side. My goal in this paper is two-fold: to provide a thorough description of the Serbian data, and then propose an account based on it.

First, I provide results of a systematic examination of the information structure of Serbian NP/PP splits. The data suggests that Serbian splits, much like the corresponding splits in other Slavic languages, typically involve a split in the information structure (see example (2a-b), where the acceptable (2a) has focus on only one of the two parts of the split NP and thus the non-equal information structure status of the two parts, as opposed to the unacceptable (2b), which has focus on the whole split NP, resulting in the two parts having equal information structure status). Moreover, and crucially, my data set shows that for any word order there exist multiple possible split information structures that can be assigned to it. As shown in (3a-c), the very same word order between the two parts of the split NP, namely **Adj-(V)-N**, in each of the three cases has a different information structure assigned to it: in (3a) this is  $\text{Adj}_{\text{given}}\text{-N}_{\text{foc}}$ ; in (3b)  $\text{Adj}_{\text{foc}}\text{-N}_{\text{given}}$ ; in (3c)  $\text{Adj}_{\text{contr.topic}}\text{-N}_{\text{foc}}$ . Moreover, the data also shows that one-to-one mapping does not exist in the other direction either and that, in principle, any split information structure can be mapped onto more than one word order. This is shown in (4a-b), where the same information structure in which the *given* part of the split NP invariably precedes its *focused* part shows up with both possible word orders between Adj and N of the split NP). To summarize, (3a-b) shows the freedom in combining of different information structures (i.e. *given-focus* and *focus-given*) with a single word order (i.e. Adj-N). On the other hand, (4a-b) exemplifies the freedom in combining of different word orders between the parts of the split NP/PPs (i.e. *N-Adj* and *Adj-N*) with a single information structure (i.e. *given-focus*).

Second, I argue that the set of facts presented in (2) – (4) receives a natural unifying explanation within an approach that treats information structure and syntax as two relatively independent levels of grammar which can be freely mapped onto one another. I show that this account is preferable to accounts of split NP/PPs that rely on the existence of specific information-structure-defined projections and/or information-structure-driven movements in the syntax which, in their purest theoretical form, undergenerate. For example, positing a focus projection whose material is spelled out to the left of vP and in which the focused adjective in (3b) would land, accounts for the example (3b). However, then (4a) would require positing another mechanism that would make sure that the non-focused material precedes such focus projection. Note that there is nothing in the data that suggests that non-focused material has to precede the focused material in Serbian. The motivation for this additional movement would unnecessarily pose an issue on its own. A similar line of arguments is used to argue against other possible incarnations of the same approach, whether they propose one or more linearly specified focus, topic or similar positions in the syntax or at the information structure level. More generally, I suggest that the existence of splits should not be motivated by or directly linked to the information structure and that other syntactic factors (such as an independent mechanism for base-generation of the splits) may play a role.

- (1) a. **Plave nosim cipele.**                      b. **U ove verujem priče.**  
 blue wear-I shoes                              in these believe-I stories  
 “I wear blue shoes.”                              “I believe in these stories.”
- (2) a. A: I like this pair of brown boots that you have. Are these the ones that they gave you to wear while you were in the army?  
 B: Ne. **ZELENE sam nosio čizme u vojsci.**  
 no green aux-I worn boots in army  
 “No. I wore GREEN boots (when I was) in the army.”
- b. A (while looking at B’s shoe storage, which among many other pairs of shoes contains a pair of green boots): Which of these shoes did you wear while you were in the army?  
 B (pointing): **#ZELENE sam nosio ČIZME u vojsci.**  
 green aux-I worn boots in army  
 intended: “I wore the GREEN BOOTS (when I was) in the army.”
- (3) a. A: Do you ever wear silver jewelry?  
 B: Da. **Srebrne nosim MINĐUŠE.**  
 yes silver wear-I earrings  
 “Yes. I wear silver EARRINGS.”
- b. A: What kind of earrings do you wear when you put these white glasses on?  
 B: **SREBRNE nosim minduše.**  
 silver wear-I earrings  
 “I wear SILVER earrings.”
- c. A: Do you wear exclusively golden jewelry, or do you wear some silver stuff as well?  
 B: *Zlatne* nosim OGRVICE I PRSTENJE, ali... ..*srebrne* nosim MINĐUŠE  
 Golden wear-I necklaces and rings but silver wear-I earrings  
 “I wear *golden* NECKLACES AND RINGS, but I (also) wear *silver* EARRINGS.”
- (4) a. Everyone is talking how there’s a crisis everywhere. I know you need to buy a car, but...  
 ...**ti kola kupuješ PRESKUPA.**  
 you car buy-you too-expensive  
 “...but you are buying a TOO EXPENSIVE car.”
- b. No, it’s not us buying organic food that is too expensive;...  
 ...**ti preskupa kupuješ KOLA.**  
 you too-expensive buy-you car  
 “...You are buying a too expensive CAR.”

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