Slavic languages

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Abstract

Slavic languages excel in marking deictic categories (of space, time and person) grammatically and in discourse strategies that are highly sensitive to communicative settings. In this sense, Slavic languages offer prime examples of the chosen topic of the International Congress of Linguists 2024.

This introduction discusses several key areas of Slavic tied to deictic settings in specific ways. These are for grammar and lexicon (1) verbal aspect, (2) modality, and (3) quantification; for pragmatics: (4) language ideology and language change; for discourse: (5) othering in public mass media, and (6) language critique as social critique. This introduction also shows how the discussed Slavic languages integrated foreign influences under preservation of their own specific identities.

Key words: aspect, modality, quantification, ideology, othering, language critique

0. Introduction

Slavic languages, the biggest language group in Europe, excel in marking deictic categories (of space, time and person) grammatically and in discourse strategies that are highly sensitive to communicative settings. Some of these properties have archaic Indo-European roots, but were modified in close contact with other language groups, yet preserving the essential typological properties even when adopting and adapting traits of other languages. This contribution will look into key areas of pertinacity and changeability from synchronic and diachronic perspectives.

1. Aspect of verbal predicates

Verbal aspect is a key area of Slavic grammar entrenched in pragmatics and discourse. The primary carrier of aspect is the verb with its goal-object, if any (i.e., the second argument of the predicate), therefore it is a property of the verbal predicate – and by way of it – of the

predication. Semantically, it is a property of the state of affairs (in the sense of logic, situation) denoted by the predication.

Historically, the first attestations of Slavic show a well-developed system of verbal prefixation, producing modes of action only rudimentarily entrenched into a system of aspectual oppositions. For example, the first dictionary of Croatian, Faust Vrančić's (1595) *Dictionarium quinquae nobilissimarum Europae linguarum Latinae, Italicae, Germanicae, Dalmatiae, Ungaricae* (in which Croatian is referred to as the language of Dalmatia, knowing that other varieties of Croatian existed as well), Latin verbs with the prefix *per-* (denoting a change of state) were translated by Croatian prefixed verbs in *do-* (*perstare* 'dostati'), *iz-* (*perire* 'izginuti'), *ob-* (*permanere* 'obstati'), per- (*permutare* 'prominiti'), v- (*percellere* 'vdriti'). The Croatian prefixes were still spatial, probably only by implicature temporal; a temporal boundary could at that time be expressed by means of the aorist. It was only with the loss of the aorist that these prefixes acquired a primarily temporal interpretation on their own, paving the way for aspectual oppositions.

The contemporary Slavic languages distinguish perfective and imperfective aspect. Perfective aspect denotes totality of the event, reaching its temporal boundaries, and imperfective aspect denotes that no temporal boundary has been reached. In East Slavic and (to some extent) eastern South Slavic, change of state of the affected entity (denoted by the second, or in its absence the first verb argument) is a necessary condition for the use of the perfective aspect, whereas in West and western South Slavic (Polish has an intermediate position, cf. data in Dickey 2000, 2015), it is an implicature, not part of the meaning (cf. also Gvozdanović 2012, 2022). As a consequence, change of state following from the perfective aspect cannot be denied in the eastern and southeastern variant, whereas it can be denied in the western and southwestern variant, as in the following example.

(1) Russian:

On prixodil-IPF/*prišel-PF, no nikogo ne bylo doma.

Croatian:

On je došao-PF/*dolazio-IPF, ali nikoga nije bilo kod kuće.[1]

Slavic makes an interesting distinction between Goal arguments which denote true undergoers and those that do not; this difference essentially depends on the verb meaning

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[1] For a single event of this type, Croatian cannot use the imperfective aspect; the latter can only refer to repeated totality, i.e. repeated coming.

combined with animacy of the Goal argument. Inanimate true undergoers can be depicted as either fully (in the accusative case) or partially affected (in the genitive case), whereas non-true undergoers and animate ones cannot be distinguished in this way.

(2) Russian:

On vypil-PF vino-ACC/vina-GEN

German:

Er hat den Wein/Wein getrunken

(3) On vstretil-PF druga-ACC=GEN

German:

Er begegnete einem/dem Freund

(Specific reading of 3 with sentence accent on *vstretil*; ambiguous with sentence accent on *druga*)

In addition, the perfective aspect can impose a specific reading on the Goal argument. Specific is defined as known/cognitively accessible to the speaker; it is a broader category than definiteness (defined as known/cognitively accessible to both the speaker and the addressee).

Dickey (2000; 2015 etc.) established a difference between the eastern and the western type of Slavic, and defined the perfective aspect of the eastern type as based on temporal definiteness, and the western type, on totality. However, this cannot account for so-called potential uses of the perfective aspect (primarily in perfective presents, e.g. in Russian, denoting something a person could do), which clearly lack temporal definiteness. In addition, the eastern South Slavic languages Bulgarian and Macedonian developed the definite article under the influence of the surrounding Balkan languages, but this did not result in a semantic doubling or change of their aspect system.

The distinction between perfective and imperfective aspect has also been described as a distinction between a total (so-called external) and an internal view. What is called an "external," or total, view corresponds to an extension of the narrated period beyond the event period (in the sense of Jakobson 1957) or of topic time beyond the event time (in the sense of Klein (1994); topic time further elaborates Reichenbach's (1947) notion of reference time) such that the event's temporal boundary and change of state following it becomes evident; this is ascribed to perfective aspect. Imperfective aspect is, on the other hand, based on the opposite relation: the narrated period is included in the event period (or the topic time in the event time) and the event's ongoingness is made visible. This kind of inclusion can be logically defined as a set–subset relation. Moreover, a subset can either be a proper subset (always smaller than the set) or simply a subset

(either smaller or equal to the set). Such differences between proper inclusion and (general) inclusion concerning topic time and event time can be shown to account for all the typological differences (cf. Gvozdanović 2012) between the two types of Slavic analysed by Dickey (2000) as based on definite vs. total for the perfective aspect, but not covering all the instances.[2] Eastern Slavic (East Slavic and eastern South Slavic) and western Slavic (West Slavic and western South Slavic) differ in aspectual restrictions on habitual, historical-present and general factual uses, where eastern Slavic uses the imperfective aspect and western Slavic allows the aspectual choice (perfective for singling out a single event in a sequence, imperfective for an *in medias res* perspective). Such instances show that topicality, specifically the topic time relative to the time of the event-situation, plays a crucial role, and subtle yet systematic differences between eastern Slavic (illustrated by Russian) and western Slavic (illustrated by Czech) can be modelled as follows (cf. Gvozdanović 2012: 795):

(4) Definition: Russian vs. Czech aspect (TSit = event time, TT = topic time)

(i) In Russian perfective aspect, TSit is a proper subset of TT (i.e. TSit $\subset$ TT);
   In Russian imperfective aspect, TT is a subset of TSit (i.e. TT $\subseteq$ TSit).

(ii) In Czech perfective aspect, TSit is a subset of TT (i.e. TSit $\subseteq$ TT);
   In Czech imperfective aspect, TT is a proper subset of TSit (i.e. TT $\subset$ TSit).

As a consequence of these differences, a total event in which topic time and event time fully coincide is an instance of perfective aspect in western Slavic, but of imperfective aspect in eastern Slavic (for more details and examples from parallel texts, cf. Gvozdanović 2012). This coincidence occurs in achievements, when an event culminates, but is not followed by a change of state (e.g., *he came, but could not find the building*). So-called general-factual meaning in Slavic (e.g., *who sewed this dress of yours*?) is as a rule expressed as imperfective in eastern Slavic (where the topic time may coincide with the event time, and enquiring about the act of sewing need not exclude the resulting state)

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[2] Dickey (2000) analyzed the eastern Slavic perfective aspect as "temporal specificity" (in a sequence of events) and the imperfective aspect as "qualitative temporal indefiniteness," whereas the western Slavic perfective aspect conceptualizes "event totality" and the imperfective aspect, "quantitative temporal indefiniteness." This was discussed in Gvozdanović (2022).

and mostly as perfective in western Slavic (where the event time is a subset of the topic time and may coincide with it). Informational properties play a crucial role in the setting of topic time.

2. Modality

Modality denotes the speaker's attitude to a state of affairs or evaluation thereof as either possible (vs. not possible) or necessary. This may refer to a state of affairs on the predicational level, or likelihood or evidentiality on the propositional level. The latter kind of modality is also called epistemic, distinguished into epistemic necessity (*it must be raining now*) and epistemic possibility (*it may be raining now*).

Proto-Slavic is assumed to have had only rudimentary modality (with modal infinitives and 'can' and 'will' verbs) and acquired a more elaborate modal system only by the late Middle Ages. For the western Slavic languages, the main influences came from Latin, the primary language of the Bible and science, whereas Old Church Slavic (primarily based on translations from Old Testament Greek biblical texts, less so on Latin texts) had less influence in the West than in the East. To these came later Luther's Bible translation, itself partly representative of vernacular (e.g. Pannonian) religious traditions (cf. Gvozdanović 2019, 2021), and later German in Central Europe. At these crossroads of multiple influences, Slavic languages, especially those in the West, developed their own creative solutions. These may be illustrated by creative extensions across modal domains.

Starting from the Middle Ages, in addition to Latin, it was Germanic, Old High German and later stages of German that exerted special influence on the neighboring western Slavic. For the contemporary languages, especially studies by Berger (2008, 2014) about German influences on Czech, Weiss (1987) about Polish modality in comparison with other West Slavic languages and with German, and Hansen (2000) about German influences on Slavic in the realm of deontic modality (especially Slavic correlates of German *müssen* 'must') should be mentioned.

Berger (2008, 2014) carefully distinguishes different degrees of likelihood that a language element results from contact: 1) clear contact, 2) motivating contact but independent development, 3) areal phenomena, 4) general developments, and 5) exclusion of any German influence; Berger discusses modal auxiliaries in Czech as belonging to the first group. At the same time, differences exist even among closely related Slavic languages, and Polish seems to belong primarily to the second group. This can be concluded from the works of Weiss (e.g., 2009: 138), who compares the use of German *sollen* with Polish *mieć* 'have to/ should' and

points to differences, e.g., in conditional clauses, in which Polish requires a conjunction and a conditional verbal form, in contrast to mere past *Konjunktiv* of *sollen* in German. Gvozdanović (2019: 406) points to Trubar's translation of Luther's Small Catechism in which German *sollen* is translated by means of Slovene *imeti* 'have to', in the deontic and epistemic sense. This corresponds closely to Latin uses of *habere* (cf. Hertzenberger 2012 on Latin) and shows the pervasive influence of Latin in the formation of developed modality systems.

The oldest modal auxiliaries in Slavic conceptualized the agent/ experiencer as the source of modality (who 'can', 'will', or 'be able to'). Since the Middle Ages, the newer types of modality in Slavic added conceptualizing externally instigated modality. An external instigator may be the speaker, another person, a causing event or a general norm. Czech is especially interesting for exhibiting an impressive variety of modal readings and meanings attached to 'have (to)' due to far-reaching extensions of the deontic meaning into other modal domains. I shall use Šipková (1985) examples, but classify the variants of Czech modal *mít* in terms of more general modal categories.

(5) Kdy tam mám (máš, má) jít?
When there have-1SG.PRES (2SG.PRES, 3SG.PRES) go-INF
'When should I (should you, should he) go there?'

(6) Měl bys mu pomoci.
Have-APP.M be-2SG.COND he-DAT.SG help-INF
'You should have helped him.'

(7) Neměl jsi mu to říkat.
Not-have-APP.M be-2SG.PRES he-DAT.SG that tell-INF
'You should not have told him that.'

(8) Petr má jet zítra do Prahy.
P. have-3SG.PRES travel tomorrow to Prague
'Peter has to travel tomorrow to Prague.'

(9) Mám se mu omluvit?
Have-1SG.PRES REFL he-DAT.SG apologize-INF
'Do I have to apologize to him?'

(10) Definice má být jasná.
Definition-NOM.SG have-3SG.PRES be-INF clear
'The definition has to be clear.'

(11) Zítra má pršet.
Tomorrow have-3SG.PRES rain-INF

'It is supposed to rain tomorrow.'

(12) Má   to   být   zajímavý   film.
     Have-3SG.PRES   that   be-INF interesting   movie-NOM.SG

'It is supposed to be an interesting movie.'

(13) Uklouzl   jsem   a   měl   jsem   spadnout.
     Slip-APP.M be-1SG.PRES and have-APP.M   be-1SG.PRES   fall-INF

'I slipped and nearly fell.'

Examples (5) – (7) illustrate different instances of instigator, internal and external. Example (8) is ambiguous between an external and an internal instigator (Petr can either be forced or impose the necessity on himself). Example (9) is ambiguous between an external instigator and the norm of behavior as an instigator. In example (10), the instigator is understood as a general norm. Example (11) is ambiguous between a norm as instigator (the meteorological situation) and an external evaluator asserting the state of affairs. Example (12) clearly expresses the report of external evaluator(s). Finally, example (13) is interesting because the conditioning event is mentioned, but its influence did not lead to the realization of the event. Indeed, literary Czech would use here *dív* 'almost', but spoken Czech uses modal *mít* in such situations, in the past tense, to express that a past situation threatened to occur, but did not materialize.

This extension of modality crucially hinges on a dynamic construal of the instigator from concrete to general deontic to becoming an evaluator of states of affairs not directly accessible to him (i.e. counterfactual). Polish had a comparable development, but requires a conditional to express a counterfactual state of affairs (cf. example (14), from Hansen 2009: 176, Weiss 2009: 138). In this sense, Polish lacks the final stage of the Czech development.

(14) Gdyby   posiedzenie   miało   trwać   dłużej,
     If-would   meeting   have-APP   last-INF   longer
     musiałbym   zadzwonić   do domu.
     must-would-1SG   call   to home

'If the meeting would have to last longer, I would be obliged to call home.'

It is also in the light of this comparative West Slavic evidence that we can reconstruct the development of modal (readings and subsequently) meanings of *mít* in Czech as a process by which the original deontic meaning became transferable to other modal domains. Two different processes underlie these possible developments: either the temporal implicature of future realization becomes part of the meaning, or the instigator (usually the speaker) becomes an evaluator of the (epistemic) likelihood or evidentiality of the presumed state of affairs on the propositional level (cf. Gvozdanović 2021).

(15)   Reconstructed development of modal variants of 'have' in Czech

/ >(temporal) > future

concrete deontic > general deontic > probabilistic

\ >(evaluator) epistemic > hypothetical > counterfactual.

By this reconstruction of the development, general deontic modality develops into probabilistic modality (of a likely development), and further bifurcates into two paths: one time-dependent, the other evaluator-dependent. Evaluator-dependent modality scopes over the entire state of affairs with its propositional value, evaluating its likelihood or evidence. This so-called subjective modality differs from so-called objective modality of predicational possibility or necessity, which essentially scopes over the predicate and by way of it, predication.

The semantic and functional investigation has shown that the Czech development was unidirectional from deontic to probabilistic and (by implicature) to temporally subsequent, or to epistemic > hypothetical > counterfactual on the evaluative cline. This process hinged crucially on implicature becoming part of the meaning, and the instigator becoming an evaluator of likelihood and evidentiality on the propositional level. The foundation for this development came from Latin, was modulated by German, and completed in a Slavic dynamic process beyond Latin and German.

3. Quantification

Quantification is one of the basic operations of cognition. Quantification presupposes delimitation and identification. The basic units of counting result from delimitation of each unit. Their identification emerges in connection with the associated entities.

In grammar, quantification surfaces in grammatical number and is limited, as grammatical categories generally are. Lexical quantification surfaces in numerals, an in principle endless category, as lexical units can be.

On a very general level, verbal aspect is also a kind of quantification of the state of affairs in inherent time, identified in terms of the verb and its arguments.

Numerals form cumulative sets of entities with the capacity of exhibiting an internal structure. Numeral systems distinguish numeral elements (one, two, three etc.) and bases or building blocks (five, ten, and twenty are the most usual building blocks); cf. also Gvozdanović (1992), Seiler (1990). Whereas numeral elements may have different grammatical properties, building blocks tend to be nouns and have syntactic head-like properties; their direct cases (i.e. nominative or accusative) are in Slavic usually accompanied by genitive of nouns, signalizing

their syntactic headedness, whereas the indirect cases either exhibit homogeneous case marking, or continue the pattern of the direct cases (in central South Slavic), cf. also Corbett (1978a, b), Franks (1994), Przepiorkowski (2004).

Numerals (similar to other nominal parts of languages) are easily borrowed and thereby not pertinent. However, pertinacity can be found in the typological properties of the numeral building blocks (e.g. quinary, decimal, vigesimal) and the mathematical operations of deriving higher numerals from lower ones.

Apart from these systematic properties, numerals also exhibit a sensitivity to deictic settings: this is why they are discussed here.

In the realm of quantification, Slavic languages preserve archaic traits such as marking gender on the lower numerals (cf. also Comrie 1992). Marking of virility, known from Polish, Sorbian and, in relics, Bulgarian, exhibits in Polish an interesting variation by distinguishing (with '2', '3' and '4') between a set of individuated male members (that can fulfill the subject function, as in 16.a) and a set resulting from identification in connection with the predicate (not capable of the subject function, as in 16.c). Individuated set members have the capacity of being topical or specific in the context or deictic setting, whereas members of a set identified within the predication itself do not have this relation to the context.

(16)   a. Dwaj   chłopcy   przyszli.
           Two-M.NOM   boys-NOM   came-PL
           '(The) two boys came.'

           b. Dwie   dziewczyny/dwa   koty   przyszły.
           Two-F.NOM girls-PL/   two-N.NOM cats-PL   came-PL
           '(The) two girls/cats came.'

           c. Dwóch   chłopców   przyszło.
           Two-GEN/ACC   boys-GEN/ACC   came-SG
           'There came two boys.'

The Central South Slavic languages Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian do not have this phenomenon, but exhibit mixed headedness in numeral constructions such that the numerals above '1' up to the bases of 'hundred', 'thousand' etc. have effectively lost their declension (partly compensated by means of prefixal uses) and appear in the nominative form followed by the genitive case of the noun. Here, the numeral governs the predicate, which occurs in the plural with '2', '3' and '4', but in the singular with '5' and above (because the word for '5' is originally a singular noun).

(17)   a. Dva   dečka   su   došla

two-M.NOM   boy-GEN.SG be-3.PL come-SG (congruent with 'boy')

'two boys came'

b. Pet   dečaka   je   došlo

five-NOM boy-GEN.PL be-3.SG come-N.SG

'Five boys came'

Both Polish and Central South Slavic have the capacity to express connectedness with the preceding context by means of (fronting in) word order. Numeral constructions themselves underlie structural restrictions as shown above and exhibit gradient headedness (in line with Corbett 1993, albeit of a different type than Russian numeral constructions discussed by Corbett).

4. Language ideology, language norms, and changes of paradigmatic valuation

The tradition of research on language ideology assumes that ideology, related to ideas, beliefs and opinions, construes underlying patterns of meaning and the corresponding frames of interpretation (cf. also Kroskrity 2004, 2010). These have a bearing on different types of discourse (cf. e.g. Verschueren 2012). In the sense of Baker (1992), society and culture are extensively constructed through linguistic interaction. Language ideologies forge links between language and other social phenomena; they moreover imply choices about how a language should be and by doing this, they establish or change relations of power (cf. a.o. Woolard 2020).

Language ideology was usually viewed in a broad way as common knowledge about language. But there is also a more specific definition of ideology about how a language is or should be. The latter part of the definition is relevant for a better understanding of language processes.

Language processes triggered by ideology are usually described in terms of "top-down" or "bottom-up" and the former have hitherto been more extensively discussed than the latter. However, we shall see that this bipartite division is an oversimplification, as important processes take place on the intermediate level; moreover, there is a continuous dialogue and negotiation.

Language ideologies hinge on indexicality with social dimensions. To this extent Silverstein (2003) formulated a difference between first and second order social indexicality of linguistic forms. First order social indexicality refers to social dimensions as such; it is employed by speakers to position themselves socially and carry out their social aims. Second order social indexicality is employed by speakers to express the sociolinguistic associations

they have registered through a cultural template (i.e. a cultural evaluation), e.g. to speak in a certain way to project a quality or an identity.

In addition to these important levels of social indexicality, I would like to point out that indexicality acquires an additional discourse-structuring function in texts and discourse, particularly in non-formal genres.

First- and second order social indexicality may be illustrated by the functioning of diglossic systems. In the history of Russian, diglossia between Church Slavic, the language of the religion since the 10th century, and spoken Russian played an important role until the Modern Era. By the different sound laws, examples such as *grad-* (Church Slavic) vs. *gorod-* (Russian) '(fortified) town/ city' coexisted in the linguistic awareness of medieval Russian speakers as high (*grad-*) vs. low (*gorod-*) variants, associated with clergy and the ruling class vs. common people (this is first-order indexicality). In the medieval chronicles (e.g. the First Chronicle of Novgorod, describing the events since the 11th century; copied at the end of the 13th/early 14th century), *grad-* is used for a religious and socio-culturally important center, and *gorod-* for a people's town with no indication of external importance. This is an example of second-order indexicality.

Beyond these, second-order indexicality, based on coexistence of different codes, with a different referential potential, can also be used with a discourse-organisational function. Examples occur in the Renaissance poetry of Dubrovnik, in which two varieties of the western Štokavian dialect of Croatian co-occurred, the ikavian and the ijekavian variant, in addition to the Čakavian ikavian dialect. Ikavian forms (e.g. *lip* 'beautiful') were more frequent and had the unmarked status, whereas ijekavian forms (e.g. *liep* 'beautiful') were marked in the sixteenth century poetry. The marked forms were used for the pragmatic function of focus.

(18) Dinko Ranjina, late 16th century)

Jedan	*lip*,	drag	pogled,		jedna	*liepa*	usti
One	lovely	dear	look		one	lovely	mouth
Iz	kih	*rič*	jako	med	slatka	se	izusti;
From	which	word	like	honely sweet		REFL	speak-PRES

'one lovely, dear look, one beautiful mouth,

from where a word sweet like honey is spoken'

In the seventeenth century poetry, however, ijekavian forms became the norm, and ikavian forms were used only as rhyme fillers (in example 19 below, *lira* rhymed with *udira*). Behind this shift between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century stood an ideological shift caused

by the Catholic Counterreformation, aiming to reach the large masses of the ijekavian-speaking territories as well, propagating them as part of the same folk.

(19) Antun Gleđević, late 17th/early 18th ct. in Dubrovnik

I	ńe	sestra	*bjeļa*	od	*lira*
And	her	sister	whiter	than	lily-GEN
Bjeļi		*liera*		veo	šijaše
Whiter l		ily-GEN		vail	sew-IMPF
U	kê	iglom		čim	udira
In	which	needle-INSTR		as	penetrate-PRES

'And her sister, whiter than a lily,

whiter than a lily vail was sewing

in which with a needle she penetrates

Ideologically based shifts of norms occurred at several points in the Modern Era, perhaps most strikingly since the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the adoption of Croatia, Serbian, Bosnian and Montenegrin as clearly differentiated language norms. These new norms in fact returned to the old norms that had not been accepted in Serbo-Croatian, as the latter was ideologically pushed into a unifying role for the Yugoslav state. After the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Serbo-Croatian language, remnants of Serbo-Croatian did not fully vanish from the mass communication spaces; the co-existence of old and new variants opened a new playground of symbolic appropriation in which the choice of variant serves as a proxy for ideology, either the new center-right (with the new language norm) or left ideology. By choosing a language variant, an individual speaker positions him/herself in the ideological spectrum and becomes perceived with the derived ideological properties. This is an example of Silverstein's second-order indexicality, which – so we can add – can produce new types of negotiation in discourse.[3]

5. Othering and language criticism as social criticism

Drawing boundaries between *Us* and *Them* is part of the basic activity of identifying. Our identity rests on what we are compared to and what we are not. Both what we are and what we are not rests on our construal of sociocultural realities. Language ideology hinges on

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[3] This was also attested in parallel Czech discourses about orthographic rules and acceptance of phonological and morphological properties of the spoken language (cf. Bermel 2007), and such processes occur in other languages as well.

representation and construal of identity by means of language, and adequacy of a language as a means and symbol of identity is questioned by language criticism probably in all cultures (for some European comparisons, cf. Felder et al. since 2017).

Linguistic and sociocultural boundaries are prone to attaining a valuative character. We tend to evaluate the significant *Others* negatively, and *Ourselves* positively. Othering on whatever level, and there are usually many levels, is connected with psychosocial biases, potentially leading to discrimination. Language is a strong symbolic means for expressing this, and an adaptive means for various kinds of explicit or implicit characterization (cf. also Irvine & Gal 2000, Gal 2005). For example, faint praise is a well-known means of discriminating women in application processes ("she is surprisingly active given her family obligations", or "she still has a potential to grow"). Wiese (2015: 23) wrote that language is the only area where racism is still allowed. Almost one decade and many legal regulations later, discrimination (much broader than racism) is still demonstrably present, but in western democracies usually expressed implicitly, so as to be understood without the speaker's liability. The choice of language has social implications, and so does language critique.

Symbolic language choice discussed in the previous section functions as an implicit social critique. Choice of gendered language forms also addresses biases and may therefore be debatable. For example, female performers of functions prefer not to be referred to by female forms (such as *političarka* '(female) politician'), because male forms are still associated with (more) competent performers. As an effect of such alignment with societal biases, female forms are sometimes used in public conflicts to suggest lack of professionality. These are examples of second-level indexicality in the function of social critique.

There are different ways of referring to *Others*, mainly the *Significant Others* in a society. One way, common in Communist discourses, was to invoke an explicit opposition between the in-group and the out-group. This is still present, but predominantly implicitly so, in different societies in relation to migrants. Explicit strategies to characterize the Significant Others usually build on negative effects they have on one's own group (e.g. in Germany the leader of the Opposition, Merz, characterized migrants, specifically illegal migrants, as those that impose on dentists' appointments at the expense of the German population; he meant illegal migrants, but as only legalized ones get free dentist's care, this was understood as referring to all migrants in Germany). Currently, strategies of Othering usually operate with implicatures. All the strategies explicitly or implicitly draw social boundaries and involve negative characterizations and stigmatization of those beyond the boundary. Although critical discourse analysis pointed to many of these aspects, a systematic elaboration of linguistic means for

signalizing Othering is still a matter of current research (e.g. in the Othering project within the SEED initiative of the 4EU+ European University). The importance of this work is obvious, because social processes are steered by linguistic means construing our cognitive worlds.

In summary, Slavic languages offer important insights into language structures and functioning in discourse due to their complex morphologies, relative flexibility of syntax, and a multitude of discourse-construal possibilities including implicit and metaphorical elements of indexicality. In this sense, Slavic languages enable important insights into cognitive and communicative language capacities.

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Abbreviations

ACC	accusative
APP	active past participle
COND	conditional
DAT	dative
F	feminine
GEN	genitive
IMPF	imperfect
IPF	imperfective
INF	infinitive
INST	instrumental
M	masculine
N	neuter
PF	perfective
PL	plural
PRES	present
REFL	reflexive
SG	singular