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The conditions of uninflectability in nouns in the Slavic languages

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Findings from investigation on 6 Slavic languages

- Uninflectedness of words belonging to inflecting parts of speech, e.g.:
 - Rus. stancija **metro** ‘metro station’, Cz. **blond** vlasy ‘blond hair’, Serb. s **dve** devojke ‘with two girls’
 - **Duracell** nagradna igra (Slovene) ,Duracell prize draw’, 50 **Milka** plišanih kravica (Serbian) ,50 Milka fluffy toy cows’
 - (? Rus. my **pryg** ‘we hopped’, oni **ljalja-ljalja** ‘they talk and talk’)
- Doleschal, U. (2000). *Das Phänomen der Unflektierbarkeit in den slawischen Sprachen*. Unpubl. habil.thesis, Wirtschaftsuniv. Wien

Structure of the talk

- Definitions
- Manifestation and degree of uninflectability in 6 Slavic languages (continua)
 - Noun
 - Adjective
 - Numeral
- How come?
 - constitutive features and/or productivity of inflectional classes

Paradigmatic uninflectedness = uninflectability

- words with no endings ever – paradigmatically uninflected
 - miss f., gnu n., f., m. (Russian, Polish, Slovak)
- inherent property of a lexeme
- > **paradigmatic uninflectedness=uninflectability**

Uninflectability

- a) **systematic** uninflectability: regular, based on linguistic features
 - all Russian nouns ending in /u/: *tabu, ragu, kenguru, Lulu, Subaru*
- b) **unsystematic** uninflectability: idiosyncratic
 - e.g., some toponyms, as in Slovak: *Skopje, Providence* (cp. inflectable *Bistrice, Opole, Provence*)
 - prescriptive norm: French names in /a/ in Russian – *Niko‘la (Nicolas), De‘ga (Degas) vs. infl. Abdul‘la*
 - may change: *Marseille (Slovak 1998 vs. 2013)*

Definition of uninflectability (paradigmatic uninflectedness)

- A word is called **uninflectable** if
- 1) it belongs to an inflectable part of speech
 - e.g., noun, adjective, numeral
- 2) does not take any endings normally found with words of that kind
 - vs. e.g., semi-inflectable Pol. *muzeum* and contextual uninflectedness
- 3) may nevertheless appear in any syntactic context typical for the part of speech in question
 - vs. e.g., defective Russ. *malo* (indef. num., only N/A)
 - Doleschal (2000), cf. Spencer (2020)



Jana vs. Mimi (Czech) - uninfl. noun

Nom.		Jan-a	Mimi
Gen.	(bez)	Jan-y	Mimi
Dat.	(k)	Jan-ě	Mimi
Acc.	(pro)	Jan-u	Mimi
Loc.	(při)	Jan-ě	Mimi
Instr.	(s)	Jan-ou	Mimi
Voc.		Jan-o!	Mimi!

uninflectable vs. defective?

- signalise all morphological categories of a part of speech and all their meanings
- e.g., verb:
 - person, tense, mood, voice? participles? gerund? aspect?
- Russian:
 - прыг ,hop‘ or ljalja-ljalja ,talk and talk‘: signalise all synthetic forms of one aspect besides participles

uninflectable

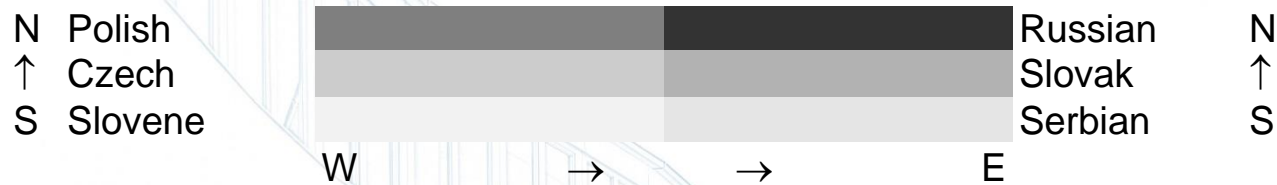
- **independently signals all synthetic forms**
 - all case-number forms (noun and numeral)
 - all case-number-gender forms and adverb (adjective)
 - not the periphrastic forms, e.g., gradation of adjective (Cz. *více blond* ,more blond‘), subjunctive of verb (Rus. *ljalja-ljalja by* ,would talk and talk‘)
 - not the word-class changing forms (following Spencer 2020)

Syntagmatic uninflectedness

- item uninflected for contextual reasons, such as text type, style, sociolect, syntactic context e.g.,
- apposition (collocation with a classifier):
 - *v naselju **Njivice*** (in the village Njivice) in Slovene
- variation
 - surnames in collocation with a first name:
 - masc. ending in **-e, -i, -o** *Maksimiliana **Kolbe*** (instead of Kolb-ego) in Polish
 - fem. ending in **-a** z *Ado **Muha*** (instead of Muh-o) in Slovene
 - abbreviations in **-o, -a** as **NATO; FIFA** in Czech
 - place names ending in **-ovo** or **-ino** as *v **Perovo, k Peredelkino*** in Russian

Manifestation of uninflectability in 6 Slavic languages

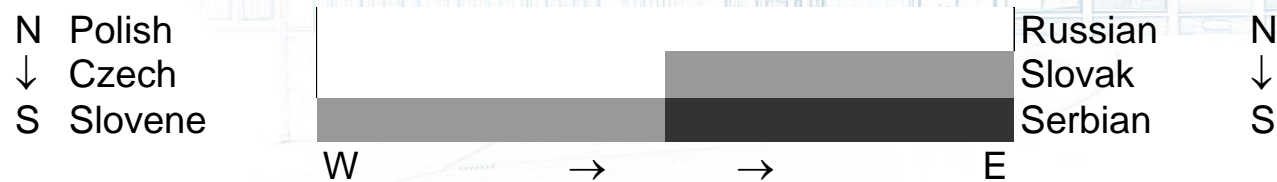
Noun



Adjective



Cardinal numeral



Noun: affected classes

- **borrowings:** *alibi, tabu* (russ., pol., cz., slk.)
- **proper names:**
 - personal names *Mario, Sigrid* (russ., pol., cz., slk.)
 - toponyms *Oslo, Cetinje* (Russ.)
 - chrematonyms *Subaru* (russ., pol., cz., slk.)
- **extragrammatical formations**
 - abbreviations: *SNG* (russ.), *ORMO* (pol.)
 - onomatopoeica, echo words: *pleple* 'Blabla' (pol.), *mami* (sln.)
 - designations of letters, musical notes

2 arguments

- 1) Systematic uninflectability shows the limits and by that the inner structure of the morphological system of a language
- 2) Unsystematic uninflectability is often a phenomenon of prescriptive norms and not conditioned by the language system

Constitutive features of inflectional classes

- How must a noun be made up in order to fit into the morphological system of a language?
 - into an inflectional class?
 - what can we learn from systematically uninflectable nouns?
1. constitutive features of inflectional classes:
 - Base form type, stem type, gender and semantic animacy (accent type)
 2. productivity of inflectional classes

(cf. Dressler 1997, Wurzel 1984, Doleschal 2006)



First names

male names: *masc., anim.*

male first names	<i>base form in</i>	C#	a	a:	o	o:	e	e:	i	i:	u	u:
	Russian	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Polish	-	+	+	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+
Slovak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Czech	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Slovene	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Serbian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

female names: *fem. anim.*

female first names	<i>base form in</i>	C#	a	a:	o	o:	e	e:	i	i:	u	u:
	Russian	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Polish	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Slovak	+	-	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Czech	+	-	?	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	-	+	+
Slovene	(+)	-	?	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+
Serbian	(+)	-	?	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+

Integration of male first names into inflectional classes

Russian

Class	base-form	gender	stem-type	inflectable	uninflectable
1.	C-0	m-anim.	hard C	<i>Bob</i>	<i>Toto, Arne, Freddy, Lou</i>
			soft C	<i>Kol' (<Kohl)</i>	<i>Mat'je, Jil'ji</i>
2.	-a, (-o)	m-anim.	hard C	<i>Akira, (Michajlo)</i>	<i>Fransua</i>
		m-anim.	soft C	<i>Matija</i>	<i>Niko'lja</i>

Integration of male first names into inflectional classes

Slovene

Class	base-form	gender	stem-type	inflectable	uninfl.
1.	C-0, -o, -a	m-anim.	hard C, V	<i>Bob-0, Tot-o, Le-o, <u>Akir-a</u></i>	-
	C-0 V-0		soft C (glide- insertion after vowel)	<i>Franz Nicolas-0 [a-ja], Francois-0 [a-ja], Arne-0, -ja, Freddy-0, -ja, Lou-0, -ja</i>	-
2.	-a	m-anim.	C	<i><u>Akir-a</u></i>	-

First names

male names: *masc., anim.*

male first names	<i>base form in</i>	C#	a	a:	o	o:	e	e:	i	i:	u	u:
	Russian	-	+		+		+		+		+	
	Polish	-	+		(+)		(+)		(+)		+	
	Slovak	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Czech	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Slovene	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Serbian	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

female names: *fem., anim.*

female first names	<i>base form in</i>	C#	a	a:	o	o:	e	e:	i	i:	u	u:
	Russian	+	+		+		+		+		+	
	Polish	+	-		+		+		+		+	
	Slovak	+	-	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Czech	+	-	?	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	-	+	+
	Slovene	(+)	-	?	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+
	Serbian	(+)	-	?	(+)	(+)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+

Integration of female first names into inflectional classes

Russian

Class	base-form	gender	stem-type	inflectable	uninflectable
2.	-a	f-anim.	hard C	<i>Alina</i>	<i>Rea</i>
		f-anim.	soft C	<i>San'ja</i>	
3.	C-0	f-anim.	soft C, š, ž	<i>Èsfir'</i>	<i>Solanž, Ljusil', Junin' ...</i>

Integration of first names into inflectional classes

Slovene

Class	base-form	gender	stem-type	inflectable	uninflectable
2.	-a, (o, e, C-0)	f	any	<i>Alina, Lea, (Klio, Melpomene, Ruth, Marguerite, Jean)</i>	<i>Lulu, Mimi, Ildiko</i>
3.	C-0	f	C	-	

Czech infl. classes

Clas s	base-form	gender/animacy	stem-type	example	uninfl.
1.	C-0 , V _{-front} -0, -o, -u	m-anim.	hard, neutral (soft)	<i>dealer-0</i> <i>Isá-0, Rousseau-0, kakadu-0, Sardou-∅ /u:/</i> <i>paparazz-o /c/</i> <i>Enesc-u /k/</i>	
2.	C-0	m-inanim.	hard, neutral (soft)	<i>help-0</i>	
3.	C _{s,n} -0	m-anim.	soft, neutral	<i>gay-0</i>	
4.	C _{s,n} -0	m-inanim.	soft, neutral	<i>package-0 /dž/</i>	
5.	V _{+front} -0	m-anim.	any	<i>Linde-0, abbé-0, yeti-0, muftí-0, grizly-0</i>	
6.	-a	m-anim.	any	<i>ninj-a /dž/</i>	
7.	-a -0 (-e, -o)	f	hard, neutral	<i>čakr-a</i> <i>Dagmar-0</i> (<i>Mathild-e, Kli-o</i>)	
8.	-a	f	soft	<i>sój-a</i>	
9.	-e , -ij-a	f	soft	<i>alo-e</i> <i>Felizi-a /ij/</i>	
10.	-0	f /inanim.	soft	<i>kartridž-0, Provence, Marseille</i>	Florence
11.	-o (-u)	n	hard, neutral , soft	<i>techn-o</i> (<i>intervi-u</i>)	

Conclusion

- Systematic uninflectability caused by
 - mismatch between constitutive features of class and properties of noun
 - unproductivity of classes
- Unsystematic uninflectability and syntagmatic uninflectedness
 - indicator of ongoing changes

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