Prikazi, ocjene

Mirjana N. Dedaić and Mirjana Mišković–Luković (ed.), South Slavic
Discourse Particles, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2010, 166 p.

The book *South Slavic Discourse Particles*, as a pioneering collection of
studies on discourse particles in South Slavic languages, represents a signifi-
cant contribution in terms of centering the attention to a topic which seems
to be marginal in the traditional study of South Slavic philology. The research
on discourse particles has flourished in linguistics in the last decades, and
occupied a prominent place within the study of English, German and Russian
language. Undertaking such research on the material of South Slavic langu-
ages represents a step forward in the study of discourse particles within the
South Slavic philology, which so far has not been thoroughly approached from
an adequate theoretical perspective.

This book consists of seven articles collected and edited by Mirjana N. De-
daić, Professor of Linguistics and Communication at Georgetown University,
Washington DC, and Mirjana Mišković–Luković, Assistant Professor of English
Linguistics at the University of Kragujevac, Serbia. The editors are also the
authors of the introductory chapter, in which they provide definitions of basic
terms, and briefly address the so far unresolved terminological confusion which
arises in the studies the book deals with. Furthermore, the editors introduce
the theoretical frameworks of the articles, the tradition of studying the dis-
course particles in the South Slavic philology, and finally they explore what
the term 'South Slavic languages' includes. The main part of the book con-
sists of six articles which deal with selected discourse particles in respective
South Slavic languages: Bulgarian, Serbian, Bosnian, Croatian and Slovenian
language. The author of the preface points out that all articles are based on
research done by authors who are native speakers of the analyzed idioms, with
the exception of the author of the article on Bulgarian. The articles share a
common topic as well as theory and methodology. The starting point for all
authors are two current approaches: Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory,
and Ducrot and Anscombe's theory of argumentation and topoï. In addition,
all authors come to the same conclusion that some particles have multiple
functions and meanings in the structure of the language, and that they function
on more levels. The level which is the main focus of this book is the level of
discourse.

In the introductory chapter *South Slavic discourse particles: Introduction*
the editors highlight two fundamental goals of this book. The first is to fill in
the lacuna in the current research of South Slavic languages, and the second
is to contribute to the understanding of the semantic meaning and pragma-
tic roles of discourse particles. Although the articles are mostly descriptive
in nature, the editors find that this book has its theoretical contribution as
well, since the articles reflect the underlying starting points of the theoretical
frameworks (argumentation theory, relevance theory and coherence–based

theory). According to the editors the title of the book *South Slavic discourse particles* raises at least two controversial questions, and thus the introductory chapter explores the interpretation of the terms from the title. The first question is related to terminology, i.e. to the term *discourse particles*. Since there are several possible alternative solutions which are applied by the authors of this book (*pragmatic particles, discourse markers, pragmatic markers, discourse connectives, pragmatic connectives, and other*), the editors find it inevitable to attract the attention of the reader to the terminological confusion as a current problem which this book does not assume to solve, but rather highlights it, and, if possible, offers some solutions. The chapter mostly aims at exploring the relationship between the terms *discourse/pragmatic* and *particles/markers* in the context of the term *discourse/pragmatic particles/markers*. As there is no clear consensus about whether these terms have the same meaning or are superior/inferior to each other (the authors indicate the disproportion between them through examples of different definitions of some terms), the question whether semantics or pragmatics should deal with these terms is not resolved either, because there is no clear borderline between these two disciplines. Another burning issue in linguistics is whether discourse particles (and related terms) form a separate class. Finally, the editors state that they have chosen the term *discourse particles* in order to avoid unwanted connotations which the term *pragmatic* might carry, and because of the commonness and acceptedness of the term *particles* in South Slavic linguistic tradition. As far as the unresolved terminological confusion is concerned, they do not consider it necessarily and only a negative phenomenon, but rather an expected consequence of the existence of various approaches and interpretations within this area.

In the following chapter the authors deal with previous research on discourse particles in South Slavic languages. The reason why this is an undeveloped tradition lies in the still dominant conservative traditional approach which favors the study of semantically transparent parts of speech, while other categories, such as discourse particles, which are considered to be semantically less transparent elements, are automatically marked as fillers, i.e. contentless hesitation markers. According to the authors, the main reason of marginalizing such categories is due to the insistence of South Slavic grammarians on non–discursive approaches to language, which is solely based on studying the written language as the 'good language', while neglecting the study of spoken discourse. The authors find that the consequence of such tendency can be seen in grammars in which discourse particles are not just treated as redundant phenomena, but are considered to be a sign of poor speaking or writing abilities. Furthermore, the authors highlight that discourse particles are given little attention in dictionaries as well, despite the fact that discourse particles belong to the most frequently used words in speech. The main reason for this whole situation can be explained by the fact that the category of particles is obviously not formal, morphosyntactic, but functional–pragmatic. It is the use of concrete examples that accentuates the contribution of this book, and indicates the important role of particles in producing discourse, not only when signaling to the hearers how utterances relate to linguistic and non–linguistic

contexts, but also in allowing for the flow of cognitive processes in structuring and understanding the message.

Since relevance theory has a very important role in current research on pragmatic markers, and since some of the articles in the collection proceed from this theoretical framework, the editors have provided a brief overview of its main postulates in the third chapter. According to relevance theory, a person's cognitive system is directed towards the maximization of relevance (*The Cognitive Principle of Relevance*). The fundamental presumption of relevance theory is, according to the authors, diametrically opposite to the starting point of traditional grammarians that particles have a marginal role in the language system, because it proceeds from the interpretation that in communication every act of ostensive communication (e. g. an utterance) conveys a presumption of its own relevance (*The Communicative Principle of Relevance*).

In the fourth chapter the editors explore the controversies which the title of this book might cause since it includes the term 'South Slavic languages'. Being aware of the complexity of the sociolinguistic situation in the South Slavic area, the authors have decided to address it in one part of the introduction, as well as clarify and justify the organization of the book. The authors indicate that the current sociolinguistic situation and the language politics in the South Slavic area dictated the organization of this book, so they provide a brief outline of the processes of standardization and the official statuses of particular languages, as well as their perception in science abroad. In that way they wanted to raise caution and awareness of the complexity of the sociolinguistic situation in the South Slavic area, and avoid the discussion and possible criticism which would unwantedly attract the attention away from the central problem. In that view they highlight: "We do not offer any theoretical support or denial for political and linguistic claims that current political entities – the states of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro – put forward. Rather, we present the situation as it is typically described by linguists from the respective cultures, albeit their descriptions might be subject to strenuous contention. Thus, we recognize that there are separate language idioms called Croatian, Bosnian, Serbian and Montenegrin." (p. 14). The fourth chapter will certainly serve as a useful source of information to foreign readers who are not so familiar with the language situation in the South Slavic area. Regarding the fact that the chapter on the Montenegrin language is not included, the editors explain: "The absence of Montenegrin chapter stems from the fact that, to be best of our knowledge, no linguist currently studies pragmatic features of discourse particles in Montenegrin." (p. 14).

An extensive introductory chapter is followed by six articles on particular discourse particles in six South Slavic languages. The first article '*Ama', a Bulgarian adversative connective*, written by Grace E. Fielder, deals with the adversative connective *ama* based on relevance theory and discourse approach. The author based her research on two kinds of corpora: the Bulgarian contemporary discourse compiled during the 1990s, and the comic novel of Alekso Konstatinov *Baj Ganjo* from the end of the 19th century, which include various registers, and reflect the written and spoken standard and non–standard

language of that period. The article consists of a semantic analysis of the adversative connectives *ama* and *no*, the analysis of their representation in both corpora, as well as their status with regard to the type of language register. In the rest of the article the author discusses the functions of the adversative connective *ama* in the role of a discourse marker. Assuming that *ama* does not solely have the role of a connective (what previous authors have indicated as well) the author indicates the existence of different interpretations of that linguistic phenomenon. On the basis of a detailed analysis, substantiated with a range of examples, the author concludes that beside its canonical function, *ama* also has a significant interactional function through which the speaker's adversative relationship with the preceding discourse or some other element of the extralinguistic context is stated.

In the article *'Kamo', an attitudinal pragmatic marker of Macedonian,* the author Alexandre Sévigny examines the characteristics of the discourse marker *kamo* as an indicator of the speaker's attitude towards the hearer and/ or the situation of utterance. After addressing the sources and analyzing the material (collected in the Egyptian–Macedonian speech community in Canada), the author offers an overview of interrogatives in Macedonian language, and compares them with the interrogatives in other South Slavic languages. A brief theoretical discussion is followed by Sévigny's analysis of the meaning of *kamo* regarding the context and situation of its usage within the six different types of language structures. Based on relevance theory the author develops a cognitive account of how the Macedonian discourse marker functions as a signal of specific speaker's attitudes.

In the article *Markers of Conceptual Adjustment: Serbian 'baš' and 'kao',* Mirjana Mišković–Luković explores the semantic and pragmatic features of the two particles in Serbian language. After a brief outline of previous approaches to studying their functions, the author presents a notion from relevance theory, that of 'conceptual adjustment', and applies it in her analysis. On the basis of such analysis she comes to the conclusion that *baš* and *kao* serve as semantic constraints on the explicit content of an utterance – but they do so in different ways. While *baš* expresses strong explicature in which it functions as the marker of non–loose use, specificatory *baš* expresses literalness, while emphatic *baš* encodes pragmatic strenghtening. *Kao*, on the other hand, expresses weak explicature, and functions as the marker of pragmatic loosening. Furthermore, the author comes to the conclusion that *kao* can also function as a signal of interpretive language use – irony and reporting.

The article written by Aida Premilovac, *The Bosnian discourse particle 'ono',* explores the discourse particle *ono* in Bosnian informal discourse. Here the author provides an overview of previous interpretations of the usage of this particle as an element without meaning, only signaling speech production issues on the part of the speaker. She deals with the non–demonstrative uses of *ono* in the corpus she analyzed, and supports her view in favor of the discourse particle. The introduction of the article is aimed at discussing the functions of the demonstrative *ono* in Bosnian, showing some problems with the traditional approach to *ono* as a particle, as well as providing the theore-

tical framework of the analysis. Furthermore, the author indicates parallels between the Bosnian *ono* and the English pragmatic marker *like*, and then sets its unique status in informal discourse. Based on the selected theoretical framework, she suggests that *ono* is a non–truth conditional and procedural linguistic device which works at the level of explicatures, critically addresses previous interpretations of this linguistic phenomenon, and highlights further issues.

The article *Reformulating and concluding*, written by Mirjana N. Dedaić, explores the pragmatic functions of the Croatian discourse marker *dakle*. The author proceeds from the question to what extent the Croatian *dakle* overlaps with similar discourse markers in other languages, and whether it is specific in comparison with them. The author analyzes the materials collected from conversation events, media talk shows and reports, various written material, and the Croatian National Corpus. The features which qualify *dakle* as a discourse marker are discussed in the introduction. The main focus of the article is on the description of specific discourse marking functions of *dakle* (reformulational, interactional, rethorical functions, and the overarching conclusional function), which are presented through examples from Croatian and other languages.

In the last article in the book, *'Pa', a modifier of connectives*, Ivo Ž. Žagar examines the meanings of Slovenian connective *pa*, especially in relation to the connectives *ker* and *sicer* with which it forms compound connectives such as *ker pa* and *sicer pa*. Based on the corpus of spoken and written Slovenian language the author analyzes the dictionary definitions of the listed connectives and concludes that the traditional approach to this problem is not adequate, and therefore focuses on the basic questions in the rest of the paper: the meaning of *pa* in compound connectives, and the role of *ker* and *sicer* when used independently and in compound connectives. All of this is supported with a series of additional examples from the analysis of the press which is based on argumentation theory.

There are many reasons why the book *South Slavic Discourse Particles* represents a significant contribution to studying discourse markers. Not only does it include a detailed introductory chapter which tackles the burning issues regarding terminology, as well as other disputable issues related to this relatively new linguistic area, but it also presents articles which deal with particular discourse markers in respective languages and clearly indicate that the South Slavic languages abound in these means of communication. Besides, the collected articles represent an important theoretical contribution, because they reflect the underlying starting points in terms of common theoretical frameworks. These articles are part of the pioneering work on language phenomena which South Slavic languages are very rich in, but have not been researched extensively. The book *South Slavic Discourse Particles* highlights the importance and the potential of the area it deals with, and lays a firm foundation for further research in the field of South Slavic philology.

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