Structure-Dependent Tone in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) Adjectives

In this paper I explore the connection between morphosyntactic structure and tone in BCS. I show how certain seemingly unsystematic accentual differences between BCS specific and non-specific adjectives reflect a structural difference between phrases that the two types of adjectives project. Contrary to traditional assumptions, I also show that the exponent of specificity on adjectives in BCS is a phonemically null morpheme with a High tone.

Two adjectival forms. BCS has two forms of adjectives: (i) "short form" (SFA) (1a-b) is used predicatively and attributively in non-specific NPs; (ii) "long form" (LFA) (2a-b) is used only attributively in specific NPs (Aljović 2002).

(1) SFA: a. pl**à:**v — blue..NOM.SG.M; b. plá:v**a** — blue.NOM.SG.F

(2) LFA: a. pl**à:**v i — blue..NOM.SG.M; b. plà:v a: — blue.NOM.SG.F

[’] rising accent
[‘] falling accent
[:] long vowel
[**bold**] locus of the winning H

After a considerable historical change of the long form inflection, which originates from a pronominal element in Old Church Slavonic (Schenker 1993), BCS now distinguishes LFAs from SFAs almost entirely by prosodic means (accent shift and final vowel lengthening) (Aljović 2002). Out of forty-two pairs of SFA/LFA forms resulting from seven cases and three genders in singular and plural, only in NOM.SG.M an overt suffix [-i] occurs in LFA in addition to the prosodic contrast present in other pairs (glá:dan – glà:dni ‘hungry’). The prosodic differences between SFAs and LFAs lack an account in the literature and at first do not look systematic: (i) if SFA has a rising accent, it becomes falling in LFA (3a→4a); or (ii) if SFA has a rising accent, it shifts one syllable to the left and remains rising in LFA (3b→4b); or (iii) the accentual difference is neutralized (3c→4c). BCS is a pitch-accent language, where falling/rising accents result from the rules in (5) (e.g. Inkelas and Zec 1988).

(3) SFA: a. plá:v**o:**j b. visók**o:**j c. l**à**bavo:j

(4) LFA: a. pl**à:**vo:j — blue.DAT.SG.F; b. vís**o**ko:j — tall.DAT.SG.F; c. l**à**bavo:j — loose.DAT.SG.F

(5) a. In a word with multiple underlying High(H) tones, the leftmost H wins.
b. In the absence of underlying H tones, a default Initial H is inserted.
c. A syllable has a rising accent if it precedes a winning H (due to H-spreading).
d. An initial H is realized as falling.

Proposal. The messy picture in (3-4), however, reveals what the actual LFA inflection is, which turns out to be different from the standard view under which LFA inflection is assumed to be added on top of SFA agreement morphemes, with exponents: [-i] for NOM.SG.M and -ø elsewhere. In particular, I propose that the only LFA inflection is a phonemically null morpheme with a H tone (i.e. X=$\boxed{\text{ø}^H}$). SFAs and LFAs have the morpheme sequences in (6-7), with the underlying H tones indicated by [^{H}].

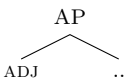
(6) SFA: a. plá:v-**o^H:**j — blue-DAT.SG.F; b. visók-**o^H:**j — tall-DAT.SG.F; c. l**à**^{H}bav-o^H:j — loose-DAT.SG.F

(7) LFA: a. pl**à:**v-$\boxed{\text{ø}^H}$-o^H:j — blue-$\boxed{\text{X}}$-DAT.SG.F; b. vís**o**k-$\boxed{\text{ø}^H}$-o^H:j — tall-$\boxed{\text{X}}$-DAT.SG.F; c. l**à**^{H}bav-$\boxed{\text{ø}^H}$-o^H:j — loose-$\boxed{\text{X}}$-DAT.SG.F

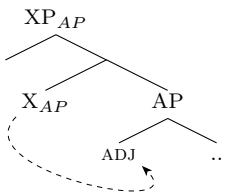
In (6-7), the agreement suffix [o^H:j] has an underlying H tone, which spreads to the preceding

vowel of the toneless ADJ, giving it a rising accent in (6a-b). In contrast to (6a-b), in (7a-b) the H tone of the agreement suffix [o^H:j] is not realized, which is indicated by the fact that the vowel preceding it does not have a rising accent. Instead, the vowel preceding [o^H:j] has its own H in (7a-b). Given that this H tone is missing from the SFAs in (6a-b), the question is where this H tone comes from. I proposed above that LFA inflection is a null morpheme with a H tone. Unlike the standard analysis where LFA inflection is added on top of agreement (ADJ-DAT.SG.F-$\boxed{\text{X}}$ order), I argue this morpheme is located between ADJ and agreement in (7) (ADJ-$\boxed{\text{X}}$-DAT.SG.F order), and bleeds H tone spreading from [o^H:j] to ADJ. Not being underlyingly linked to a vowel, the H tone of the LFA inflection $\boxed{\text{-}\emptyset^H}$ links to the first vowel preceding it, i.e. the final vowel of ADJ. If ADJ is monosyllabic, this results in a falling accent (7a). If ADJ is polysyllabic, the H tone spreads to the vowel preceding it, giving it a rising accent (7b). SFA/LFA distinction is neutralized in (6c-7c) due to the underlying initial H tone of the ADJ, which wins in both SFA and LFA as the leftmost H in the sequence, regardless of the presence of other H tones, and is realized as falling. The sequences of morphemes in (6-7) represent what SFAs and LFAs look like in PF. The remaining question is which of these morphemes correspond to heads that project syntactic structure and which do not. Assuming syntax provides input to PF and LF, elements that are present in the syntax are expected to have semantic and/or syntactic reflexes. Elements that have neither syntactic nor semantic effect can be inserted in PF, as argued for agreement nodes (Embick and Noyer 2007). I suggest that ADJ projects AP in both SFAs and LFAs (8). The LFA inflection (X=$\boxed{\emptyset^H}$) marking specificity projects XP above AP (8b). X lowers to ADJ in PF by M-merger (Marantz 1984; Bobaljik 1995). The node marking agreement with the noun, is added in PF, hence has no semantic or syntactic effect. Finally, the ending [-i] that occurs only in NOM.SG.M (in addition to $\emptyset^H$) is not LFA inflection. I argue there are two vocabulary items realizing agreement in NOM.SG.M: (i) [-i] is inserted in the context of X (NOM.SG.M→[-i]/X__); (ii) [-ø] is inserted everywhere else (NOM.SG.M→[ø]/elsewhere). Their choice is determined by the Elsewhere Principle (Kiparsky 1973). The analysis of LFA inflection as [$\emptyset^H$] rather than [-i] entirely captures the messy situation in (6-7). Finally, accentual properties of BCS adjectives also have implications about word internal accent assignment domains, which I discuss in the paper, but leave out here for space limitations.

(8) a.



b.



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