

Steven Franks. *Microvariation in the South Slavic Noun Phrase*. Bloomington, Indiana: Slavica Publishers, 2020. 518 pp. ISBN 978-0-89357-498-7.

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The structure of the nominal domain poses many interesting questions for linguistic theory, both from perspectives that focus on individual languages and from cross-linguistic perspectives. Despite the volume of available research on this topic, how much functional structure (if any) is projected in the extended domain of N of a given language and whether all languages have uniform extended domains of N is still largely debatable. Within generative syntax (assumed in this book), before Chomsky's "Remarks on Nominalization" (Chomsky 1970), the structure of the nominal domain was quite different from the clausal domain, the topmost projection of a nominal domain being a lexical projection, NP, with D introduced as its modifier. The recognition that there are some parallelisms between the nominal and clausal domains, as well as the rise of X-bar syntax (Chomsky 1970; Jackendoff 1977), turned the tables, and D became a head projecting a DP layer above NP (Szabolcsi 1983; Fukui 1986; Abney 1987). While, for languages like English, the DP hypothesis is assumed by most linguists, there are also a few who argue against the DP hypothesis altogether (e.g., Payne 1993; Bruening 2009). From a crosslinguistic perspective, many have suggested or adopted the Universal DP Hypothesis, where it is argued that every nominal domain universally projects a DP (Bowers 1991; Longobardi 1994; for Slavic, Progovac 1998; Leko 1999; Pereltsvaig 2007, a.o.). However, certain typological differences between languages that have articles and those that lack articles have led to a parametric approach to the nominal structure, where only languages that have articles project a DP (Bošković 2005, 2008, et seq.; Despić 2011, a.o.). Some later cross-linguistic work further shows that some languages exhibit mixed behavior and are not easily classified within the two-way cut between NP and DP languages, arguing for a three-way typology, where languages with affixal articles represent a middle case between NP and DP languages (Talić 2015, 2017), or for an even more fine-grained scale, where even Italian can either project a DP or have the D head adjoin to N without projecting (Oda 2022). Other than DP, functional structure in the nominal domain in Slavic has also been proposed for other purposes (e.g., Aljović's 2002 analysis of BCMS long-form adjectives involves FPs above NP, where F hosts the long-form inflection). This book contributes essential empirical detail as well

as very appealing theoretical proposals towards an answer to these important questions about the kinds of functional projections present in the nominal domain and which Slavic languages have them. The author zooms in on the microvariation between closely related languages and arrives at a nuanced proposal for the structure of the noun phrases in South Slavic languages. The major levels of projections above NP explored are DP and KP, where South Slavic languages either project all the way up to KP (e.g., Bulgarian), or lack a DP but have a KP (e.g., BCMS), or they are in a transitional stage of language change: Slovenian turning from a KP-only to a KP-and-DP language, and Macedonian turning from a KP-and-DP language to a DP-only language. These proposals are motivated throughout the book by a closer look into microvariation regarding a range of phenomena—clitics, reflexives (e.g., the Bulgarian *nego si* construction), clitic doubling, orphan accusative, agreement in coordinations and agreement with “hybrid” nominals.

The author starts with the background necessary to follow work on microvariation and general syntactic architecture. He summarizes his chosen view of language change as “a failure in the transmission across time of linguistic features” (Kroch 2001) in situations where linguistic input during language acquisition could be analyzed in more than one way, given that this book deals with closely related languages and a seemingly identical sentence in several Slavic languages may have slightly or significantly different structures. A possibility of having two competing structures available in certain situations is also entertained in the book. The standard minimalist bottom-up structure building in line with the Bare Phrase Structure notation (i.e., not indicating X' levels unless there is a clear specifier) is assumed, but the author uses XP labels for clarity, to indicate that a certain head does not project further. For word-building, the Distributed Morphology (DM) framework is adopted, although the use of the term “Vocabulary Item” seems to depart from how it is typically used in the DM literature. That is, the author states that “vocabulary items are constructed not only in the course of the syntax, but also on the PF-side of the grammar” (p. 10), which seems to indicate that the term “vocabulary item” here means something closer to “word”, or a “complex syntactic head”, or an entry in a dictionary of a language, rather than a phonological exponent of an abstract morpheme that is not present in the course of the syntactic derivation and only gets inserted at the PF side (Harley and Noyer 1999). Regarding the presence of functional categories cross-linguistically, the author rejects the universalist approach mentioned above and adopts the view that languages may differ in the amount of functional structure projected above NP (and in other domains) and that meaning alone is not sufficient to motivate structure. Rather, additional morphological or syntactic motivation is necessary to give rise to a syntactic functional projection.

More specific assumptions about features and potential functional projections in the nominal domain in South Slavic are then summarized and

explored. The author discusses two views on features—privative (Harley and Ritter 2002) vs. polar (Halle 1997). The former, adopted in Franks (2017) and in this book (e.g., discussion of agreement in chapter 7), is the view that features are organized into hierarchies and that the presence or absence of individual features leads to specific values (e.g., 1st person = [_{PERS} PART, AUTH], 2nd person = [_{PERS} PART], 3rd person = [_{PERS} \emptyset]), rather than that features have an off-and-on switch but are always present in the feature bundle (as in the latter view). A variety of options are considered for how nominal features like person, number, gender, case, definiteness, etc., are introduced in the derivation and whether they project syntactic functional layers. Regarding the category of pronouns, which are typically treated as Ds, the author addresses a well-known contrast between BCMS and Italian (Progovac 1998), where in the former only pronouns can move higher than the adjective *sama* ‘alone.F’, but in the latter, both pronouns and proper names move higher than *sola* ‘alone.F’ (pp. 48–49). He takes BCMS pronouns to be realized in the head K unlike in Italian (where pronouns and proper names move to D), given that the motivation for this movement in BCMS cannot be definiteness (crucially pointing out that proper names get their definiteness/specificity without moving). More broadly in Slavic, the author argues that the KP projection is present and hosts case features which are valued by a corresponding functional projection in the clausal structure. Regarding definiteness, the author assumes that in languages like English or Bulgarian, this feature projects a DP, while in others it is an auxiliary feature appearing on some other projection (e.g., on KP in BCMS) without resulting in a functional layer of its own (see also Oda’s (2022) treatment of D in Italian, where D can undergo head-adjunction to either N or some higher functional projection). This approach may shed light on some important questions about how definite and indefinite interpretation is achieved in the grammar if languages vary in how much structure they project in the nominal domain. More specifically, a point of frequent criticism of non-universalist approaches to the presence of DP cross-linguistically has been that definiteness is achieved differently in languages with and languages without articles. In the former, the head D introduces the *iota* operator in the course of the syntactic derivation and semantics merely “reads” the interpretation from the composition of D and N, where the *iota* operator turns the property (predicate) into a unique individual having that property (argument) (Partee 1986). In the latter, the *iota* operator is not introduced during the syntactic derivation, so various type-shifting operations are used by semantics to switch between predicates and arguments (Partee 1986; Chierchia 1998). Thus, if the definiteness feature can be present in the syntax even if it does not project its own phrase (i.e., if the *iota* operator can be introduced as a part of a complex syntactic head that also introduces other features), we capture the effects of the lack of DP projection in the syntax, but the semantics still has the same combination of pieces contributed during the syntactic derivation to interpret.

After all, Chierchia's (1998) Blocking Principle ("Don't do covertly what you can do overtly") only applies straightforwardly under lexicalist assumptions where it is known before spell-out whether a language has an overt or covert article, which determines whether or not type-shifting as a last resort can take place. Assuming "late insertion" in line with DM alongside the Y-model of grammar, the availability of an overt exponent for a definite article would not be visible to the LF component, so the Blocking Principle could not be a condition applied at the syntax-semantics interface and would at most be a more general economy condition. Assuming that the definiteness feature is always introduced in the syntax, whether or not it projects a phrase, seems to be more compatible with the late insertion assumption adopted in this book. For gender and number features, several options are considered, both where these features project their own phrases and where they are introduced alongside other features in heads that are not specifically designated to them (e.g., little *n* for Gen and *D* for Num), but the author does not clearly choose one option over the other. However, these projections do not show up in later structures in the book, so the latter option seems to be adopted at least for the sake of simplicity.

The author then addresses some issues in binding posed by the colloquial form *nego si* 'him self' in Bulgarian, a pattern observed by Schürcks (2003, et seq). This exploration leads to proposing a more detailed structure for Bulgarian KP, with an AgrP between KP and DP. Interestingly, this reflexive form is not available in Macedonian, despite the two languages often being classified as having the same nominal structure, as the only two Slavic languages with overt definite articles. This leads the author to propose in chapters 5 and 6 that Macedonian has simpler nominal structure than Bulgarian. The other two languages closely contrasted are BCMS and Slovenian. While there is no separate chapter focusing specifically on nominal functional projections in BCMS, it is hinted throughout the book that this language has a KP to host clitics and help derive full pronominal forms. I wonder if this projection can also be hosting some elements usually classified as prepositions, especially in situations where Genitive case alternates with *od* 'of' in BCMS (see PP-complement extraction cases in Talić 2019: 1133–34). For Slovenian, it is argued based on Orphan Accusatives that this language is in an early stage of developing a DP (between NP and KP), and the author labels this projection IndefP, arguing that this projection is responsible for particular interpretations Orphan Accusatives get, since language change towards DP emerging often starts with the indefinite article. The final chapter addresses agreement in coordinations and agreement with hybrid nominals. While the author reviews key patterns and cross-dialectal variation in these contexts and provides interesting accounts, this chapter seems the least connected to the rest of the book and could have perhaps been left out for a separate project. From the discussion provided in chapter 7, it is not clear how the functional

structures specifically proposed for South Slavic languages discussed in the rest of the book bear on these agreement phenomena.

Overall, for its attention to empirical detail and microvariation both between related languages and dialects, interesting theoretical proposals, and open questions raised throughout, this book is likely to be a stimulating read and resource for researchers investigating the structure of the nominal domain across Slavic and beyond as well as for students searching for topics and open questions in this area. While it is at times difficult to follow what particular set of assumptions are finally adopted for a particular structure, it is commendable how many different options for various portions of the structures are considered throughout the book. This is one of the rare sources that take microvariation and cross-dialectal differences seriously and engage with it, rather than focusing on judgments from the majority of speakers and treating the rest as exceptions to put aside or as noise. Given that language change is an unstoppable force, there is certainly a lot of microvariation that can shed light on many important questions, as was done in this book for the nominal domain.

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