

# On the Nature of the Bulgarian Prefixes: Ordering and Modification in the Case of Multiple Prefixation

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**Goal:** The current work treats the topic of multiple prefixation in Bulgarian and prefix ordering in ‘stacking’ and presents syntactic, semantic and morphological evidence for establishing three types of prefixes- *lexical* (idiosyncratic), *inner* (argument structure modifiers) and *outer* (adverbial) prefixes. I also suggest that it is the different syntactic derivation of these prefixes which is responsible for the observed (semantic and morphological) differences between the three groups.

**Background:** Slavic languages allow multiple prefixation to the same verb (also known as ‘stacking’). Prefixes in Slavic are usually divided into two groups, ‘lexical’ and ‘super-lexical’. However, some authors suggest that there is a third group, the purely perfectivizing prefixes, which should be considered a separate class as well (see Babko-Malaya 1999, Svenonius 2004, Markova 2007, among others).

The **lexical prefixes** (1) are considered to have an unstable meaning and to display a rich idiosyncrasy. They derive a completely new lexical item, i.e. a verb with a new meaning, and there is no semantic compositionality and transparency between the root (or verbal base) and the lexical prefix which constitute the lexically prefixed verb. Due to this, speakers are often unaware of the underlying presence of the lexical prefix within a lexically prefixed verbal base. Following the general assumption that lexical storage should be minimal, with the consequence that only unpredictable information will be stored there, I suggest that such prefixes are derived in the Lexicon.

In contrast to the lexical prefixes, the **super-lexical prefixes** (2) are claimed to have a stable meaning such as ‘begin’, ‘finish’, ‘do for a while’, etc. They do not change the basic meaning of the verb they attach to but just modify it in a similar way as adverbials do (Babko-Malaya 1999).

Finally, the prefixes with a **pure perfectivizing** role (3) yield an imperfective verb perfective without any additional semantic change being involved. Thus, they just indicate that the process denoted by the verb is completed (Babko-Malaya 1999: 51).

**Proposal:** I propose a modification of the general division of prefixes into lexical, super-lexical and purely perfectivizing. Thus, I claim that a more fine-grained analysis is needed to account for the correct behavior of the Bulgarian prefixes. The main reason for this comes from the fact that the group of the super-lexical prefixes includes two very different types of prefixes (both *inner* and *outer*). Accordingly, I do away with the misleading term ‘super-lexical’ and instead treat prefixes as *outer* and *inner* aspectual modifiers (i.e. *outer* and *inner* prefixes).

The term **outer** refers to the fact that these prefixes modify the whole event, i.e. they are event modifiers. In contrast, the term **inner** refers to the fact that such prefixes interact directly with the argument structure of the base verb and are thus not mere event modifiers (see Markova and Padrosa-Trias 2008).

**Evidence:** My division of prefixes into *lexical*, *inner* (including the pure perfectivizers) and *outer* comes from several factors: (i) morphological productivity (e.g. participation in complex event nominal formation and prefixation of loan verb); (ii) semantic transparency (non-idiosyncrasy), and (iii) hierarchical relations within the same group.

The **outer prefixes** will be shown to productively participate in various morphological processes (e.g. complex event nominalizations (both loan and native) and prefixation of loan verbs) and to be hierarchically ordered with respect to each other in the case of multiple prefixation (i.e. ‘stacking’). Following Cinque (1999), I propose that outer

prefixes head their own functional projections which appear in a strict order above VP (or  $\bar{V}P$ ). This will correctly account for several facts: (i) the fact that the outer prefixes are always strictly ordered with respect to one another (see also Istratkova 2004); (ii) their compositionality and transparency in meaning (as they derive above VP/ $\bar{V}P$ ), and (iii) their morphological productivity.

As for the **lexical prefixes**, due to the fact that they are derived pre-syntactically, this will prevent them from (i) having transparent and compositional meaning, and (ii) participating productively in loan-word prefixation and loan or native complex event nominal formation. As for the word order factor, although the lexical prefixes are less prone to stack to one another, they do not show any hierarchical restrictions in the case of lexical-stacking. However, when lexical prefixes co-occur with outer prefixes, then the relevant order is always [*outer* [*lexical* [V]]], which supports my claim that the lexical prefixes form a syntactic (and probably indivisible) unit with the V head.

Finally, the **inner prefixes** are those which are syntactically (and hence morphologically) higher than the lexical prefixes but lower than the outer prefixes (i.e. we always have [*outer* [*inner* [*lexical* [V]]]]). They often co-occur with other inner prefixes abiding to strict hierarchical ordering relations in the same way as the outer prefixes do. Hence, I claim that both the inner and the outer prefixes are derived in dedicated aspectual projections à la Cinque (1999). Additionally, in the same way as the outer prefixes, the morphological complex [inner prefix + verb] is often semantically compositional and transparent. However, as far as the productivity test is concerned, not all of the inner prefixes productively enter morphological processes such as complex event nominalizations and loan-verb prefixation.

(1) Lexical prefixes

a. *kaža* ‘say’

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|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (i). <i>na-kaža</i> ‘punish’    | (iv). <i>iz-kaža</i> ‘express’ | (vii). <i>o-kaža</i> ‘render’ |
| (ii). <i>raz-kaža</i> ‘narrate’ | (v). <i>po-kaža</i> ‘show’     |                               |
| (iii). <i>do-kaža</i> ‘prove’   | (vi). <i>ot-kaža</i> ‘deny’    |                               |

b. *dam* ‘give’

- |                                |                                  |                                    |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (i). <i>za-dam</i> ‘ask’       | (iv). <i>ot-dam</i> ‘dedicate’   | (vii) <i>pri-dam</i> ‘add; attach’ |
| (ii). <i>pre-dam</i> ‘deliver’ | (v). <i>iz-dam</i> (1) ‘publish’ |                                    |
| (iii). <i>pro-dam</i> ‘sell’   | (vi). <i>iz-dam</i> (2) ‘betray’ |                                    |

(2) Super-lexical prefixes

a. *cheta* ‘read’

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|--|---|
| (i) <i>po-cheta</i> ‘read a little bit’  | (iv) <i>na-cheta se</i> ‘read enough’         |
| (ii) <i>do-cheta</i> ‘finish reading’    | (v) <i>raz-cheta se</i> ‘start reading a lot’ |
| (iii) <i>za-cheta se</i> ‘start reading’ |   |

(3) Purely perfectivizing prefixes

a. *na-pisha* ‘write down’      b. *po-stroja* ‘build up’      c. *iz-jam* ‘eat up’

**Selected references:** Babko-Malaya, Olga. 1999. *Zero Morphology: A Study of Aspect, Argument Structure and Case*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Rutgers, New Brunswick, NJ. Cinque, Guglielmo. 1999. *Adverbs and Functional Heads: A Cross-Linguistic Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press. Istratkova, Vyara. 2004. On multiple prefixation in Bulgarian, *Nordlyd* 32.2, *Special Issue on Slavic Prefixes*, Tromsø, University of Tromsø, pp. 301-321. Markova, A. 2007. Deverbal nominals in Bulgarian: A syntactic analysis. MA thesis, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Markova, A. and Susanna Padrosa-Trias. 2008. Some remarks on prefixation: Evidence from Bulgarian, Catalan and English. To appear in *Interlingüística* 19. Svenonius, Peter. 2004. Slavic prefixes and morphology: An introduction to the *Nordlyd* volume, *Nordlyd* 32.2: *Special issue on Slavic prefixes*, Tromsø, University of Tromsø, pp. 177–204.