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One Day Some Evil Man: Inferentiality of Expressions within Political and Legal Texts in the History of the Serbian Language

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyze the pragmatic functions of expressions conveying unspecified referentiality and meaning within political and legal texts in the history of the Serbian language. The corpus consists of charters and letters from medieval times, correspondence from the first half of the 19th cen-

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tury regarding the uprisings, and stenographic notes from the proceedings of the National assembly of the Principality/Kingdom of Serbia from the end of the 19th century. We specifically analyze how the pragmatic functions underline and imply different strategies of manipulation.

This research falls under the scope of historical pragmatics (diachronic pragmatics, to be more precise), thus we employ an approach that transitions from form to function. The analysis is qualitative by nature. The interpretations are based solely on the texts within the observed documents, while correlations between meanings within the texts and a more global historical context will be a subject for future studies.¹

In this paper we offer an approach to studying historical and pragmatic phenomena that is based on a textual corpus from the history of the Serbian language. We start our analysis with the stenographic notes (we will identify valid examples in them), and later we search for similar examples of use in older texts. We base our search on the assumption that there are pragmatic principles which remain stable within a language through the centuries.

The main corpus is divided into three sub-corpora:

I. From medieval times:

(1) *Повеље и писма Деспота Стефана* (прир. Александар Младеновић, 2007) (*The Charters and Letters of Despot Stefan*, editor Aleksandar Mladenović, 2007) (Младеновић, 2007);

(2) *Зборник средњовековних ћириличких повеља и писама Србије, Босне и Дубровника* (Владимир Мошин, Сима Ћирковић, Душан Синдик, Београд, 2011) (*A Collection of Medieval Charters and Letters Written in Cyrillic from Serbia, Bosnia and Dubrovnik*, by Vladimir Mošin, Sima Ćirković, Dušan Sindik, 2011) (Мошин et al., 2011);

II. From the First Serbian Uprising: *Први српски устанак: Акта и писма на српском језику*, књ. I, 1804–1808, у редакцији Радослава Перовића, 1977) (*First Serbian Uprising: Legal Documents and Letters written in Serbian*, Vol. I, 1804–1808, editor Radoslav Perović, 1977) (Перовић, 1977);

III. *Стенографске белешке о седницама Народне скупштине Краљевине Србије за 1898. годину* (седница држана у Нишу 1898. године, штам-

¹ The results of historical pragmatic research cannot be empirically confirmed (with the exception of the most recent past) (Bax, 1983, p. 18, as cited in Jacobs & Jucker, 1995, p. 7) and thus remain on the level of hypotheses. In our case, the recent past is represented by the examples from stenographic notes.

пане у Београду, 1899. године) (*Stenographic Notes from the Meetings of the Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbia for the year 1898, assembly held in Niš, notes printed in Belgrade in 1899*) (*Стенографске белешке, 1899*).

Theoretical and methodological aspects of the research

Pragmatics

According to the general definition, pragmatics is the study of the meaning that a speaker or writer intends to communicate and which the listener or reader interprets (Yule, 1996, p. 3). Pragmatics incorporates the study of *speaker meaning* (the intended message that the speaker sends via their utterances); *contextualized meaning* (interpretation of what people say in a given context); *implicit meaning* (the meaning of beyond what is said); *closeness between speaker and listener and the ways this closeness manifests itself* (different ways of assessing if something was left unsaid or implied with the help of emotional closeness or distance as a key factor) (Yule, 1996, p. 3). All these aspects need to be taken into consideration, especially when analyzing political discourse.

Throughout our analysis, we followed the principles laid out by Paul Grice and his classic pragmatic models. According to Grice, communication is a rational interpretative activity that is conducted by applying the cooperative principle and the conversational maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner (Grice, 1991, p. 28). By adhering to the cooperative principle, the speaker should mold their utterances so that they are appropriate for the moment when the interlocutors are communicating and for the given aim of the conversation (Grice, 1991, pp. 28–29). If the speaker is completely cooperative, they will observe the conversational maxims (Grice, 1991, p. 26): Maxim of quantity: the speaker's utterance should be as informative as the conversation requires. Thus, the speaker gives as much information as is required, but they should not give more than that. Maxim of quality: the speaker's utterance needs to be true. The speaker should not utter things they deem untrue or say things they cannot support without evidence. Maxim of relation: the speaker's utterance needs to be relevant for the conversation at hand. Maxim of manner: the speaker needs to be clear, concise and orderly in their expression. Hence, the speaker

should avoid ambiguous or unclear utterances. The speaker should present their findings in a systematic manner and strive to be concise (unless circumstances require a different approach). Lastly, the speaker should not endeavor to confuse the listener when giving answers to their questions.

When flouting or hedging the maxims, the speaker communicates to the listener that the core of the utterance is on the implicit plane, and the speaker invites the listener to search for the intended meaning on that level. There are several types of implicatures, but those that are derived from disregarding the cooperative principle and the maxims are conversational implicatures (Grice, 1991, pp. 26, 30). These implicatures contain the meanings or propositions that are implicitly expressed by the speaker within their sentence or utterance and are not a part of what is said (Huang, 2013, p. 156). Conversational implicatures can be further divided into generalized or particularized implicatures, depending on whether the context has an effect on their interpretation or not. In the case of our research, the context has an impactful and even crucial role when interpreting the utterances from our corpus, thus we will focus on particularized conversational implicatures.

The context can be defined as “a collection of relevant characteristics of a dynamic surrounding where a linguistic expression is used” (Мишковић-Луковић, 2018, p. 30). The context can include situational, linguistic, encyclopedic and social context (Мишковић-Луковић, 2018, pp. 30–31). Additionally, Yule notes that the physical and linguistic contexts are intertwined so as to complement the pragmatic interpretation, especially when it comes to referential expressions (Yule, 1996, p. 21).

Historical pragmatics

Historical pragmatics is a novel interdisciplinary science that employs the methods of historical linguistics and pragmatics, and various other related disciplines (Jacobs & Jucker, 1995, pp. 4–6; Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2010, pp. 4–7; Мишић Илић, 2015, pp. 7, 14). Its subject matter can be viewed as: “the study of intentional language use within a social and cultural context in earlier periods of time, the study of the development of language use and the study of the communicative causes of language change in general” (Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2010, p. 11). Succinctly, it studies the use of language within a context (Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2010, pp. 20–21; Мишић Илић, 2015, pp. 9–10).

There are three distinct approaches to historical pragmatics (Jacobs & Jucker, 1995, pp. 10–25; Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2010, pp. 11–15; Мишић Илић, 2015, pp. 9–14): Pragmaphilology, which focuses on synchronic studies of pragmatic characteristics of old texts across different genres; Diachronic pragmatics, which elaborates on pragmatic characteristics of linguistic forms and their development in the history of a particular language²; Discourse-oriented historical linguistics, which scrutinizes discursal and pragmatic phenomena as a motivating factor in language changes.

In Serbian linguistic studies, historical pragmatics was introduced via an article written by Biljana Mišić Plić titled “Historical Pragmatics: New Perspectives for the Study of Language and Tradition” (Мишић Илић, 2015). Alongside that article, there are a few select papers by Slobodan Pavlović that are dedicated to concrete pragmatic problems and historical pragmatics. The majority of papers from this author deal with genres of medieval business and legal literacy and can thus be categorized as pragmaphilology (Мишић Илић, 2015, pp. 10–11; Павловић, 2000b). Another paper by the same author deals with performatives and thus with aspects of diachronic pragmatics (Павловић, 2000a).

Politeness theory

The theory of politeness of Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson is based on Grice’s pragmatics and observance of conversational maxims. The theory revolves around *preserving face* (Popović, 2017, p. 57). The authors distinguish two types of *face*: *positive face* – the goal is to preserve the positive image an individual enjoys within a community; *negative face* – incorporates the freedom of speech of an individual and their right not to be hindered in their activities and their desire to be treated as an equal and capable member of a community (Brown & Levinson, 2011, p. 62; Popović, 2017, p. 58).

The societal variables that play a role in choosing the right politeness strategy include: the social distance between speaker and listener (symmetrical relation); the relative power difference between the speaker and listener

² There are two approaches within diachronic pragmatics: semiotic, i.e., from form to function, and onomastic, i.e., from function to form (Jacobs & Jucker, 1995, pp. 13–26; Taavitsainen & Jucker, 2010, pp. 13–14; Мишић Илић, 2015, pp. 11–12).

(asymmetrical relation); the level of the seriousness of the potential face threat (Brown & Levinson, 2011, pp. 74–83; Popović, 2017, pp. 63–64).

Possible politeness strategies, according to Brown and Levinson (2011, pp. 68–71) are:

1. Do the FTA³
 - 1.1. On Record
 - 1.1.1. Without redressive action
 - 1.1.2. With redressive action
 - 1.1.2.1. Positive politeness
 - 1.1.2.2. Negative Politeness
 - 1.2. Off record
2. Don't do the FTA

Simulated ignorative

Words such as *some*, *one*, *a certain* can express indefinite referentiality but are not complete synonyms (Ивић, 1971, pp. 111–118, 2000, pp. 139–141). They can also be used as simulated ignoratives. Milka Ivić, citing Polish authors, defines a simulated ignorative as an expression that a speaker uses deliberately in order to avoid telling the listener who the person they are talking about is, but it still gives hints that enable the listener to discern and identify about whom the speaker is talking (Ивић, 2000, p. 146).

Analysis

Complete contextualization⁴

In the studied corpora, there are only a few examples where the direct politeness strategy is employed⁵:

³ FTA – face-threatening act.

⁴ Contextualization in this paper refers to the ability to identify the person or place that is being talked about by using their names, status, title, places or relations to other people.

⁵ The most relevant and illustrative parts of the examples have been marked with **bold letters**.

(1) азъ марсьили геурьги, повеленьемъ славнога дужа (!sic) венетькога кнезь града дубровьника и все судие и векьници (...) кльнемъ се, ввещамо се твому великому с(вѣ)тому ц(а)р(ь)ству дрь[жати вр(ь)ху зло]творенье неверь[ного] (!sic) крала уроша и врѣху братью его и рода его⁶ ... (*The Oath of the Citizens of Dubrovnik, given to the Bulgarian Emperor Michael Asen, 1253. June 15th, 200, 4–8*)

Ја Марсиљи Ђеорђи, кнез града Дубровника, и све судије и већници, по заповести славнога дужда бнетачкога, кунемо се, обећавамо твом великом светом царству да ћемо држати на врху злотворење **невернога краља Уроша, браћу његову и род његов.**

(2) вдь кнеза чрномира [д]рагому ми приѣтелу кнезу дубровькому геурьги мерсьили и всеъмь властелом дубровьки (!sic). се цю ми сте писали и поручали, все разумѣхъ. Да ере сте рекли, ми држимо вѣру и приѣтельство тевѣ и твоимъ лудемъ, то, властеле не могу ѣа покрити. Види се та вѣра и приѣтельство. Придоше ваш(и) лудие и еше моего чл(о)вѣка лукана и добитькь узеше. И послахъ къ вамъ: вратите ми. И не дасте Ницаре, нь паче га продасте⁷ (*Letter of the Prince Črnomir for the Prince of Dubrovnik and its nobles, 1252–1254, July, 218, 1–8*).

Од кнеза Чрномира драгом ми пријатељу кнезу дубровачком Ђеорђи Мерсиљи и свим властелинима дубровачким. Ово што сте ми писали и поручили, све разумех. Рекли сте: ми држимо веру и пријатељство теби и твојим људима. То, властелини, не могу ја покрити. **Види се та вера и пријатељство. Приђоше ваши људи и узеше мога човека Лукана и добитак узеше. И послах ка вама: вратите ми. И не дасте ништа, но га већма продасте.**

The main reason why a direct strategy is used in the first example (1) is the naming of the common enemy. In example (2) we encounter a direct cit-

⁶ I, Marslji Đeordi, Prince of Dubrovnik, together with all of the judges and jurors vow, in accordance with the oath of the famed Doge of Bnetac, and promise to your holy majesty that we will convict **the misdeeds of the unfaithful King Uroš, his bothers and his kin.**

⁷ From Prince Črnomir to my dear friend the Prince of Dubrovnik Đeordi Mersilji and to all the nobles of Dubrovnik. What you have written to me and communicated to me, I have understood it all. You told me: we hold the trust and friendship of you and your men in high regard. To this statement, my nobles, I cannot attest. **Behold that trust and friendship. Your men approached and took my righthand man Lukan and the profits I gained. I wrote to you: bring them back. And you returned nothing but furthermore sold him [into slave labor].**

ing of guilt. Complete contextualization encapsulates stating a name (if it is known) and the action which has been executed, and in certain cases stating the place and time when the action happened.

Conditions that enable using decontextualization as a manipulative strategy

There are three necessary, but not sufficient, conditions to initiate decontextualization: the decontextualized action has to be connected to the past; the utterance needs to have an expression with indefinite referential meaning; there needs to be a motivational factor (explicit or implicit) for decontextualization.

The action that is being talked about has to be placed in the past before the moment of speaking. One can decontextualize the recent past as well as the distant past:

Example of decontextualization of the recent past (belongs to the same conversation or debate):

- (3) Председник Министр. Савета Министар Иностранних дела. – [...] Сви сте се ви готово сагласили, да је све остало, што је у закону предложено, одлично, само се делите у мишљењу, да ли да остану плате у државном буџету, или да пређу на окружни буџет? **Једино се један професор нашао да каже, да овај закон не заслужује пажњу, коју му указује Народно Представништво.**⁸ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, p. 495, strategy of threatening the face of a speaker who spoke before)

Example of decontextualization of the distant past (does not belong to the same conversation):

- (4) Председник Министарства, В. Ђорђевић. – Господин предговорник вели, да није чуо, да је неко дете страдало. Ја нећу да говорим шта се до сада дешавало. У архиви Министарства унутрашњих дела, кад

⁸ The President of the Ministry Council for Foreign Affairs – [...] You are more or less in agreement that all the other amendments suggested in the law are in order. The only point of division is whether the wages should stay within the state budget or if they should be transferred to the municipality budget? **Only one professor professed to say that this law doesn't deserve the attention it has garnered by the National Assembly.**

сам био начелник санитета, нашао сам званичан рапорт, да су **једно дете свиње појеле, за то што није имало никога да га чува.**⁹ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, р. 507)

Example (5) showcases that an action cannot be decontextualized if the action in question has not transpired, even though the formal conditions have been met:

- (5) Живко Јеремић. – [...] **Може да наступи случај да један невоспитан председник, који не води много рачуна о своме положају да се напије у једној сеоској кафани и да свима викне: „ја имам Краљев Указ, ја сам, ја,“ а међутим, он није ништа.**¹⁰ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, р. 407)

Formally speaking, a decontextualized expression needs to contain an expression with indefinite referentiality (Piper et al., 2005, pp. 936–937). This is a necessary but not sufficient condition to use decontextualization as a strategy of manipulation because the indefinite expression can serve a variety of pragmatic functions, as is illustrated in the following examples:

- (6) Имајте, господо, на уму, да ви не можете да сравните **једног кмета** који се поставља претписом и који одговара и морално и материјално са **једним служитељем** који чисти канцеларију има плат (sic!) 900–1200 динара.¹¹ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, р. 425, highlights the prototypical members of a social class)
- (7) Мика Поповић. – [...] али мислим да није право да **један човек** страда ако му се не дозволи да се може жалити.¹² (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, р. 453, the meaning *any man* or *whichever man satisfy the conditions*)

⁹ The President of the Ministry, V. Đorđević – The gentleman states that he did not hear that a child had perished. I will not repeat now what has happened thus far. In the archives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, where I served as a chief of health care, I found an official report that states that **some child was eaten by pigs because there was no one to babysit them.**

¹⁰ Živko Jeremić – [...] A situation can happen where one insolent president who doesn't pay much attention to his station gets drunk in a village inn and shouts around, **“I have the King's Decree, I am me,” and yet, he is indeed a nothing and a nobody.**

¹¹ Bear in mind, gentlemen, that you cannot equate **a village chieftain** who is inducted with a decree and is morally and materially responsible for the village with **an office assistant** who cleans our offices and has a wage of 900–1200 dinars.

¹² Mika Popović – [...] but I think it's most unjust that **a man** should perish if he's not given a chance to appeal.

The third condition that can be fulfilled in order to consider decontextualization a form of manipulation is the existence of a clear (explicit or implicit) motivation for decontextualization. The speaker has to witness the situation or else be acquainted with it so that they could decontextualize it. It is very rare that the motivation is explicitly stated, thus it needs to be reconstructed from the broader context. Here is an example where the motivation is explicitly stated:

(8) Министар Финансија Стеван Д. Поповић. – [...] Било је више случајева, где су такве ствари претресане у новинама. Ја нећу да вам поименице наведем те примере, али ћу ипак да вам наведем један такав случај. **Дошао је један човек из иностранства, и имао је код себе драгоцених и јувелирских предмета. На царинарници питали су га да ли има што год за царинење? и он одговори да нема. За тим га одведу у собу за преглед, и нађу код њега те ствари. Па шта је било са њиме? Њега је царинарница за то осудила, али тиме њему није био пресечен пут да се противу те осуде жали.** [...] Јесте господо, ја сам казао да се човек осуди од стране царинарнице. **Мене мрзи да вам кажем име човека, код кога су нађене златне и скупоцене ствари.** Тај човек није случајно радикал, он је ближи мени него радикалима.¹³ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, pp. 447–449)

One can always doubt the truthfulness of explicitly stated motivation, and there is a possibility that there is another, tacit, reason why decontextualization took place.

Examples where an expression with indefinite referentiality was used due to lapse of memory or due to an irrelevant piece of information will not be considered in our analysis.

¹³ The Minister of Finances Stevan D. Popović – There were multiple cases where such things were probed in the newspaper. I will not name each and individual case, still I will state one such case. **In this case there came a man from abroad and he had in his possession valuables and jewelry. At the customs office, they asked him if he had anything to declare. He answered that he didn't have anything. Then, they led him to the interrogation room and found on his person such valuables. And what happened to him? The customs office put in an official accusation, but this did not hinder him to file an appeal against the verdict.** [...] It is true, gentlemen, I advocated that this man should be sentenced by the customs office. **I would hate to reveal the name of this person who carried gold and other such valuables.** That man is coincidentally not a republican, he's closer to me than to the republicans.

Formal aspects of decontextualization

In the examples from medieval times, the following variants were found:

Indefinite adjectival pronoun + qualifier *evil* + general noun *people/man*, or another ethnonym (*a Turk/a person from Dubrovnik*):

- (9) [...] ерь нѣки залъ чловѣкъ господство ви на то на [веде]¹⁴ (I/3. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lady Jevđenija and Prince Stefan and Vuk, Dubrovnik 30th of July 1396; Младеновић, 2007, 10–11, p. 21*)

јер неки зао човек ваше господство на то наведе

- (10) господство да ти узна пишу ѡтуде намъ наши тръговци керъ ѡвои съде нѣки турчинъ узѣ имъ · ѿ · товаръ свите · а узрокъ тому говоре · нѣки су дубровчане длъжни за смъ платите ми ви.¹⁵ (I/27. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lord Despot Stepan (Stefan), 24th of April 1405, 3–5, p. 42*)

Твоје господство да зна, пишу нам отуда наши трговци јер им сада **неки Турчин** узѣ пет товара свите. А узрок томе говоре: **неки су Дубровчани** дужни за со. Платите ми ви.

Indeterminate adjectives:

- (11) ако се цю на неѡа господство ти расрѣдило за које годи неѡово неумѣные или за зла чловѣка кои господство ти на грѣхъ наводи (...) ¹⁶ (I/43. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lord Despot Stefan, Dubrovnik, 17th of March 1415, 7–9, p. 66*)

Ако се нешто на неѡа твоје господство расрдило, за које год неѡово незнање или **за зла човека који твоје господство на грех наводи** [...]

Phrases with the common noun *враг* (*непријатељ*):¹⁷

¹⁴ For **some evil man coerced your lordship to such deeds**

¹⁵ As your lordship knows, our tradesmen have written to us because **a Turk** took from them five loads of goods. And the reason for this: **some citizens of Dubrovnik** owe them salt. Pay me back.

¹⁶ If for some reason your lordship feels scorn for him because of some of his lack of knowledge or because **some evil man drives his lordship to sin...**

¹⁷ Fiend (enemy)

(12) И ДА НЕ ПРИДЕМО НА ВАСЬ С ВАШИМЬ ВРАГОМЬ¹⁸ (*The oath of Despot Andej of Hum to the Prince of Dubrovnik, the nobles and municipality, 1247–1249, p. 186, 16–17*).

и да не приђемо на вас **с вашим врагом**

In examples from the 19th century (both subcorpora), we note the presence of simulated ignoratives. In fewer cases, we encountered the indefinite pronoun *неки*, *-а*, *-о*, which is often converted to its plural form:

(13) Васа Анђелковић. – Што се **неки** позивају на то како је један завод пропао, па зар ви, господо, с тога, што је некоме кућа изгорела никада да не запалите ватру у својој кући?¹⁹ (*Стенографске белешке, 1899, p. 386*)

(14) Но притом особито сожаљујем да ја Вашој ексцеленцији и овај невесели глас јавити морам да су **неки злотвори наши** таково што представили су вишепоменутому комендату нашем да смо ја и мој синовац протојереј Матфеј у **таково злохитроје** помишљеније дошли [...] ²⁰ (Jakov Nenadović and Protá Matej Nenadović St. Stratimiroviću, 22nd of July 1806; Перовић, 1977, p. 197)

In the majority of cases, the number *један*, *-на*, *-но* with a non-numerical function is used:

(15) **Има један завод код нас о коме не води нико рачуна**. Тај завод је установљен принудно, средством округа [...] ²¹ (*Стенографске белешке, 1899, p. 380, Discussion concerning the Law of joint-stock companies*).

(16) Ја ћу да вам наведем **један пример**, како је било **у једној општини**, ту је био постављен за председника **један**, који је платио 7 динара

¹⁸ And let us not approach you **with your fiend**.

¹⁹ Vasa Anđelković – Why are **some** drawing attention to the fact that one institute was destroyed; why, my Sirs, does that mean that just because somebody's house burned to the ground once, you do not light a fire in your own house?

²⁰ I am especially sorry that I have to report this dreadful news to your Excellency, that **some of our enemies** libeled us and said that my nephew the protopriest Maftej and I did such **a vile thing** to the aforementioned commanding officer where we had malintent against him.

²¹ **There is one institute near us that nobody supervises**. That institute was established forcefully with county funds [...]

порезе, али он је био пријавио још 2 шпекулативне радње [...] ²²
(*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, р. 400).

The adjective *известан*, -на, -но:

(17) Пера Тодоровић. – Ја бих могао да напоменем, господо, да ми сви знамо, да је од зајмова **извесних чланова**, који су били у управном одбору било неприлика [...] ²³ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, р. 387)

When an indefinite expression is used in the place of a proper name or a direct referential expression, one can note that there was a flouting of Grice's maxims of quantity, quality and manner, based on the scalar implicature *proper name/definite expression* → *indefinite expression*. Instead of using a proper name or a definite expression, the speaker deliberately uses indefinite expressions so as to manipulate listeners and flout Gricean maxims of quality and quantity:

If the speaker uses in their utterance a semantically weaker expression, an implicature is generated that a semantically stronger expression does not exist. Scalar implicatures arise on the basis of conversational maxims of quality and quantity, for the speaker chooses expressions that are the most accurate and informative on the given semantic scale. (Мишковић-Луковић, 2018, pp. 42–43)

Additionally, the speaker flouts the maxim of manner, which requires us to avoid using ambiguous or unclear expressions (Grice, 1991, pp. 26–27).

Pragmatic functions of decontextualized expressions

The Middle Ages

In medieval times, decontextualization is used to preserve the face of the sovereign; the choice of this strategy is based on the social variable of distance and power:

²² I will give you **one example**: as happened in **one municipality**, **one person** was established as a president who previously paid 7 dinars in taxes, and he had previously declared 2 additional speculation assets [...]

²³ Pera Todorović – I could highlight, gentlemen, that we all know that there were inconveniences because **certain members** who were on the board of directors took loans [...]

- (18) листъ милости ваше примисмо у комъ господство ви намъ писаше ерь кнете наше тръговце съблюсти и имати је у всем добръ прѣпоручене на томъ захвалюемо многосръдъно а такози ви право за своје приатеље и да господство ви зна потомъ уписаше намъ наши тръговци кои су у новомъ брьду тужеки се ерь имъ господство ви постави жестоку заповѣдь како у три дни да се имаю двики и испратити съ всѣмъ изъ вашега владаниа. И този би много чудно намъ видѣти. А този уни не могу никако учинити да такози је намъ видѣти ерь нѣки залъ чловѣкъ господство ви на то на[веде] а богъ вѣ кому је все вьбываеиено ерь всакому вашему узвиш[ению] и всему цю кне бити почтено господство ви немо весели мимо все ину господу вашои чѣсти и ваша милость море знати.²⁴ (I/3. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lady Jevđenija and Prince Stefan and Vuk*, Dubrovnik 30th of July 1396, 3–15, p. 21)

Лист милости ваше примисмо у ком нам ваше господство писаше да ће наше трговце чувати и имати их препоручене у свом добру. На том захваљујемо многосрдачно. Тако вам право за своје пријатеље и да господство ваше зна, писаше нам потом наши трговци, који су у Новом Брду, тужећи се, јер им ваше господство постави жестоку заповест како се у три дана имају дићи и са свим испратити из вашег владања. И то нам би много чудно видети. А то они не могу никако учинити. Тако је нама видети, **јер неки зао човек ваше господство на то наведе**. А Бог, коме је све објављено, зна да се ми радујемо сваком вашем узвишењу и свему што ће бити поштено вашем господству, вашој части, мимо све друге госпoде. И ваша милост то може знати.

- (19) ако се цю на негa господство ти расьдило за коие годи негово неумѣные или за зла чловѣка кои господство ти на грѣхъ наводи²⁵ (...) (I/43. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lord Despot Stefan*, Dubrovnik, 17th of March 1415, 9–12, p. 66)

²⁴ The letter of your grace we have received, where your Lordship wrote that you will protect our tradesmen and have them in your good graces. We thank you for that most profusely. But then the tradesmen wrote to us, their friends, and to your Lordship so you may be informed: the tradesmen who were residing in Novo Brdo complained for your Lordship issued a strict order that they should pack themselves up and leave your territories within three days. We were very surprised to witness that. For it is impossible for them to do so. So, we surmised that **some evil man has coerced your Lordship into this**. And God, who knows all, can testify that we rejoice in all of your ascending deeds and in all actions that are fair towards your Lordship and your honor above all other noblemen. And your Grace surely knows that.

²⁵ If for some reason your lordship feels scorn for him because of some of his lack of knowledge or because **some evil man drives his lordship to sin...**

Ако се нешто на њега твоје господство расрдило, за које год његово незнање или **за зла човека који твоје господство на грех наводи** [...]

The motivation behind the used expression lies in the preservation of the ruler's face, whereby the addressees, being his subordinates, transfer the blame not onto the sovereign, but onto an unnamed *evil man*. The greatest number of such examples was found in the letters written by people from Dubrovnik who were known for their deft diplomatic skills. It is not easy to determine if *some evil man* really existed in every noted example or if this is a case of a polite expression with which people avoided shifting blame directly to the sovereign. Similar formulations can be found in hagiographies where the sin committed by the ruler is diverted to the devil or the wife²⁶:

(20) **Ali kako postrada? Podiže zavist đavo koji uvek mrzi dobro. A izvršilac takvog služenja bila je njegova žena.** [...] Čujte. Dolazi carica k caru pokazujući tužno lice, neukrašen i neobičan nastup, roni suze i unutrašnjim plamenom preseca glas. I, da ukratko kažem, podiže oca na oslepljenje prvorodnoga sina, vaistinu slična Isaku dobrim pokoravanjem i poslušnošću.²⁷ (Camblak, 2000)

In medieval times, decontextualization was used as a way to preserve the face of the addressee, whereby one can conclude, within the given context, that the events described were real-life events:

(21) **А [шо] пише твоја милость ерь су у нашемь граду нѣци. Кон се злом твоје дѣце пе[к]у и кон се тѣще своимь злоумьствомь за вась. Ми госпогнѣ теи люди не знамо. (...)**²⁸ (I/22. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lady Jevđenija*, 10th of November 1402, 19–24, p. 38)

²⁶ This formula is reminiscent of the biblical tale of Adam and Eve, where the blame for Adam's sin was put on his wife, the snake and the devil.

²⁷ **But how did it come to the suffering? Jealousy was raised by the devil who hates all that is good. And the executor of his deed was his wife.** [...] Hear ye, hear ye. The empress goes to the emperor, her face all sad, her demeanor common and peculiar, tears flooding from her eyes and with an inner flame her voice was beset. And, to be brief, she incited the father to blind his firstborn son, and truthfully, she was like Isaac who was subservient and obedient.

²⁸ **And your grace has written for in our town there are some people who proclaim to take care of you with their evil deeds and the misdeeds of your children. Us ladies don't know such people.**

А твоја милост пише јер су у нашем граду неки који се злом твоје деце и својим злоумством старају за вас. Ми госпође те људе не знамо.

(22) А сѣди господине деспоте тамо јесу наши ꙗко [З] властелинѣки у име живанъ гучетиѣки и гоико гучетиѣки и мароје гучетиѣки које је нѣкои зли дубровчанинъ нашъ опивши се у нѣцю. Удавилъ а како ни пишу и праве да му нѣсу криви у ниѣемъ²⁹ (I/53. *Letter from the citizens of Dubrovnik to Lord Despot Stefan, Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, 12th of March 1422, 16–20, pp. 78–79*)

А сада, господине деспоте, тамо јесте наша властелинска господа у име Живана Гучетића и Мароја Гучетића, које је **неки зли Дубровчанин** наш, опивши се, у нешто удавио. А како нам пишу, праве се да нису криви ни у чему.

This strategy is used to preserve the face of the addressee or the group to which they belong³⁰. This strategy, within the observed corpus, is utilized by the citizens of Dubrovnik, and they use it to preserve the respectability of their city.

Uprising correspondence

Given the nature of the corpora, the smallest number of examples of expressions conveying unspecified referentiality was found in the Uprising correspondence (it mostly contained information about battles). A characteristic of this specific corpus is that expressions with indefinite referentiality are used to keep the identity of spies, informants and sources of information secret:

(23) И овај глас данаске чуо сам од **једнога великога терговца**, који поред Саве из Земуна дође, да је велики Ђорђе од Београда хармади која противу Ниша стоји отишао [...] ³¹ (Constantine Jovanović to St. Strati-mirović, in Klenak, 18th of August 1806; Перовић, 1977, p. 214)

²⁹ And now, Mr. Despot, it is true that our noblemen Živan Gučetić and Maroje Gučetić are there, but **some evil man from Dubrovnik**, having gotten drunk, has caught them up in his affairs. And as they write to us, they pretend not to be guilty of anything.

³⁰ In more recent studies, it is emphasized that the term ‘face’ can be applied to encapsulate a whole community (Popović, 2017, p. 58).

³¹ And this piece of news I heard from **a famous tradesman** who came to Zemun via the river Sava, that Karadorđe left the threshing floor which is located opposite Niš.

(24) **Један Сервијанац** 7^о сего м-ца на скелу Дмитровици прешао и казивао да они Турци који су у пјаток прошаста, тојест 8^о сего, из логора код Шабца побјегли [...] ³² (Bishop Antim to St. Stratimirović, in Mitrovica, 9th of September 1806; Перовић, 1977, pp. 218–219)

Keeping the identity of the source hidden may be motivated by the fact that the source is irrelevant or we are purposefully concealing information.

We found a few examples where decontextualization is used as a strategy for preserving face, either one's own or the recipient's, especially in cases where the addressee is of a higher social position than the writer:

(25) Већ знам какав је глас тамо о нама. От мала начине велико чудо, и то све **наши непријатељи, от који на тој страни има их много који с нама љубовно обхождавају се и свој занат проводе [...]** ³³ (Jakov Nenadović to Constatine Jovanović, Camp in Vučetić, 20th of February 1806; Перовић, 1977, p. 162).

(26) Што су пак Вашеј ексцеленцији такови глас принели да смо ми долуименовани чрез комменданта нашег Карађорђа уарестовани, штовише и посечени, **таквому приношенију непријатеља наши нимало веровати није.** ³⁴ (Jakov Nenadović and Prota Mateja Nenadović to St. Stratimirović, 22nd of July 1806; Перовић, 1977, p. 197)

Stenographic notes

Generally speaking, there are a lot of examples in the stenographic notes where a rhetorical strategy of manipulation is used in order to persuade the listener to accept the speaker's point of view. It is mainly employed when switching from general observations towards particular examples. The strategy of partial contextualization is present as well, whereby one detail is revealed (such as

³² **A Serb** on the 7th of this month passed Dmitrovici with a ferryman and kept saying that those Turks last Friday ran away from the encampment near Šabac.

³³ I already know what people are saying about us there. They blow things out of proportion, **specifically our enemies who are very close-knitted with you and who are free to do their trades**

³⁴ They have passed on such a rumor to your Excellency that we who have signed the document have been arrested and moreover killed. **One should not trust such rumors coming from our enemies.**

time, place, etc.), while other details are left out. This creates the illusion that the expression was contextualized.

The most important functions of decontextualization within this sub-corpus are:

Giving a negative example of a phenomenon, followed by a strategy of preserving face:

(27) Пера Тодоровић. – Па ипак и поред свих тих ограничења бивало је случајева и нашло се пута и начина да се чланови управе задуже код тих завода, и ако то није смело бити по статуима (!sic) тих завода. Ти, који су се тако задуживали, који су осећали потребу да и од сопственог завода зајме, махом су завршавали дефицитом, те су их морали избацити из завода, а њихови пријатељи, који су им чинили те услуге испод руке, морали су за њих да плаћају. **Ја нећу да износим ничија имена овде, али такви случајеви фактички постоје.**³⁵ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, pp. 379–380, Discussion concerning changes in the Law of joint-stock companies)

Employing the strategy of making someone lose face, which is conventionally executed through partial contextualization:

(28) Милан Драгојевић. – Господо, ја мислим, ако се хоће истински уставност у земљи, власти ни до данас нису давале мира кметовима у општинама, него је продужавано све исто како је која влада дошла, па су кметове одреда истеривале напоље; **а то је било баш 1887. год. кад је дошао један Министар**, па од једанпут казао: напоље, не питајући ко је тамо.³⁶ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, p. 392)

³⁵ Pera Todorović – And still, notwithstanding all the limitations, there have been cases and ways where members of the board were indebted to these institutes, even though this should not have been permitted by the rules of these institutes. Those people who have indebted themselves so and who felt the need to take loans from their own institutes have ended up with a deficit and thus had to be expelled from the institution, and their friends who did them these favors under the radar had to pay out for them. **I will not name anybody here, but these cases factually exist.**

³⁶ Milan Dragojević – Gentlemen, I believe that if we truly want a constitutional country, then the governments so far have not given any rest to the serfs across different municipalities but have continued in the same fashion with each change in the government – they’ve pushed the serfs out; **and this particularly happened in 1887, when a certain Minister came** and, out of the blue, said, “out”, without bothering to ask who was there.

In certain examples from the stenographic notes, the indefinite nature of the expressions can cast doubt on the truthfulness of the event that is being talked about. Thus, we could have fictionalized events that are being related as true so as to gain supportive votes in a debate in the assembly.

In the next section, we will use examples from the stenographic notes to present a detailed pragmatic analysis of individual examples with the lexeme *један*³⁷.

(29) Васа Анђелковић. – **Што се неки позивају на то како је један завод пропао**, па зар ви, господо, с тога, што је некеме кућа изгорела никада да не запалите ватру у својој кући? или, ако се неко возио у колима, па пао с кола и скрхао ногу, зар за то ви никад да се не возите на колима? **Ја ћу, само, господо, да вам наведем Трстеник. Тамо имамо један завод у коме седе први људи у управи**, па кад ти људи не могу добити новац са својим потписима на меницама, онда ће наступити такав случај да неће имати кога да потпише, мањ да доведете у управу људе, који ће да упропасте завод.³⁸ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, p. 386)

We can note that with his use of the expression *one institute*, the member of parliament Anđelković tries to consciously distance himself from the mentioned institute or does not want to state the exact name of the institute, for he is in a situation where such actions might be perceived as inappropriate. However, he gives a plethora of other details (the institute is in Trstenik, the employees are people from the board of directors, the case revolves around promissory notes, etc.), which makes it very easy for listeners to infer which institute he is talking about. Even though the referential expression *један* is indefinite in its nature, in pragmatics we cannot observe referential expressions solely as a relation between a word/phrase and an object/person in the real world. Reference is contextually layered in the sense that the speaker assumes that

³⁷ Depending on the context, this lexeme can be translated as: one, certain, a/an, some, etc.

³⁸ Vasa Anđelković – **Why are some drawing attention to the fact that one institute was destroyed**, why, my Sirs, does that mean that just because somebody's house burned to the ground once, you do not light a fire in your own house? Or if somebody was driving in a carriage and then fell out of the carriage and broke their leg, does that mean you will never ride in a carriage? **I will, gentlemen, only remind you of Trstenik** (author note: city in Serbia). **There is one institute where a group of directors of board sit around**, and when these people can't procure money with their own signatures on promissory notes, then the situation will arise where there will be no people willing to sign the notes and even less to bring in new people to the board who will demolish the institution.

the listener will interpret the referential expression in the way the speaker intended them to, taking into consideration not just the isolated meaning of the expression, but also the context and implicatures that might be included (Yule, 1996, p. 17). This effect manifests itself when the aforementioned Gricean maxims are flouted. In the given example, the speaker flouts the maxim of quantity because he uses the indefinite expression *један* but then adds detailed information that helps identify it. Furthermore, he flouts the maxim of manner because he uses an indefinite expression and is not concise in his retelling. On a subconscious level, the speaker even flouts the maxim of quality, for he is not totally honest with his listeners since he clearly knows which institute he is talking about.

A similar scheme can be observed throughout our corpora:

- (30) Милан Драгојевић. – Господо, ја мислим, ако се хоће истински уставност у земљи, власти ни до данас нису давале мира кметовима у општинама, него је продужавано све исто како је која влада дошла, па су кметове одреда истеривале напоље; **а то је било баш 1887. год. кад је дошао један Министар**, па од једанпут казао: напоље, не питајући ко је тамо.³⁹ (*Стенографске белешке*, 1899, p. 392)

In example (30), we can note an interesting occurrence. Member of parliament Dragojević first criticizes the government for behaving unjustly towards the serfs and even cites the exact year to boost his argumentation, only for him to use the expression *један Министар* and avoid directly naming the person who was responsible for that situation. The maxims have been flouted again in a similar vein as in example (29), where a **referential** expression takes on a new meaning on the implicit level. Thanks to the linguistic context, listeners can without difficulty discern who the Minister in question was, given the contexts of when the sentences were uttered and to what purpose. Simultaneously, though, there is a desire to either save the speaker's face or to avoid casting direct blame on one particular person.

As we did in the previous two examples, we will now scrutinize two statements given by politician Đorđe Jelenković:

³⁹ Milan Dragojević – Gentlemen, I believe that if we truly want a constitutional country, then the governments so far have not given any rest to the serfs across different municipalities but have continued in the same fashion with each change in the government – they've pushed the serfs out; **and this particularly happened in 1887, when a certain Minister came** and, out of the blue, said, "out", without bothering to ask who was there.

(31) Ђорђе Јеленковић. – Жао ми је што се не могу сложити са оном господом која траже Указ за председнике. А ево томе узрока. Кад Господар поставља кога указом он му само даје звање али му не диже знање и поштење. Ма како био неко постављен, било указом, било претписом; он ће, ако је вредан, тачан и поштен, бити добар. А ако он није такав дајте му колико хоћете указа, он неће ваљати и неће поштено радити. **Ја сам видео, господо, неколико указних чиновника, којима су сви укази били забадава. Видео сам једног пијаног указног чиновника где лежи у јендеку.** *Ја сам ишао путем на колима па су ми се коњи од њега поплашили да сам једва жив остао, и хтео сам погинути заједно са децом. [...]*⁴⁰ (Стенографске белешке, 1899, р. 409)

In the example above, we can see that Jelenković is flouting several maxims in order to produce different effects on his listeners. In an effort to gain support from other members in the National Assembly, he first uses the indefinite noun phrase *једног пијаног чиновника* whom he saw in the gutter, thereby he flouts the maxim of manner because he is being deliberately vague. A possible reason for this flouting might be that he had recognized the hapless official and wished to save his face; in the case that he had not recognized him, he could have desired to emphasize the corruptness of any official that comes to power. Even though Jelenković observes the maxim of relevance by giving a further description of the situation (in italics, in our example) that is relevant to the topic at hand, we can deem that he flouts maxims of quantity (by giving unnecessary personal descriptions) and quality (he cannot give any proof whether or not anything he says is actually true) with the aim of arousing empathy with his colleagues and rallying them to his side with his subjective point of view.

⁴⁰ Ђорђе Јеленковић – I am sorry, but I cannot agree with the gentlemen that ask for the decree for presidents. And here is why. When the president situates someone with the decree, he can just give him a position and title, but they can't further their knowledge or respectability. It doesn't matter how one got to the position, whether it was through the decree or by prescription; this person will, if he is honest, punctual and honest, be a good candidate. And if he is not such a person, you can bestow as many decrees as you would like upon him, but he will not be a good fit, nor will he work honestly. **I have, my gentlemen, seen a few decreed officials who have taken the decrees as a joke. I saw one drunken decree official lying in the gutter.** *I was going by on a road in a coach and my horses got so scared of him that I barely survived, and I nearly perished together with my children [...]*

(32) Ђорђе Јеленковић. – Ја бих сад само замолио г. Министра Унутрашњих Дела да дода 2 тачке овде, где се говори да ће се председник поставити из оне општине за коју се поставља, да се дода, ако хоћете да будемо сигурни: да се може постављати за председника те општине само онај, који у истој општини живи, и који у њој има неиокретна (sic!) имања, на које плаћа преко 30 динара непосредне порезе, без пријаве какве шпекулативне радње. **Ја ћу да вам наведем један пример, како је било у једној општини, ту је био постављен за председника један, који је платио 7 динара порезе, али он је био пријавио још 2 шпекулативне радње, таман толико, колико му је потребно било да плати 30 динара непосредне порезе, па после кад је престао бити председник нису му имали шта продати да плати само порезу.**⁴¹ (Стенографске белешке, 1899, pp. 399–400)

In the last example, Jelenković wants to introduce amendments to the Municipality laws and present additional conditions for suitable presidential candidates for municipalities, so as to avoid situations where speculative assets would be counted into their property. He thus gives a statement where he consecutively utilizes expressions with indefinite referentiality, even though it is abundantly clear that Jelenković has a particular person in his mind, as can be deduced from the fact that he knows this person's tax obligations and property statements. But as was the case with other previous examples, this line of vague expressions and flouting of maxims is used with a goal of distancing the speaker from the given situation and the possible consequences that the speaker would have faced if he had been more direct, but also to implicitly lead his listeners to conclude who the person of interest is. One must bear in mind, though, that both the official from the gutters and the president of the municipality, as they are described in the examples, might not exist and are only used as

⁴¹ Ђорђе Јеленковић – I would just ask Sir Minister for Internal Affairs to add two points where the topic states that the president shall be appointed from the municipality that he is running for, to add so that we are ensured: that for the function of the president of that municipality can only be appointed a person who lives in the same municipality and who has property in that municipality, where he pays taxes higher than 30 dinars without any recorded speculation assets. **I will give you one example, as it happened in one municipality: one person was established as a president who previously paid 7 dinars in taxes, and he had previously declared 2 additional speculation assets, which was just enough so he would need to pay the 30 dinars taxes, and later when his presidential period ended, they had nothing to sell back to him so he couldn't pay back the taxes.**

a means of manipulation. This is highly likely, for the expression *један* does not automatically bind the speaker to state the truth. This sort of manipulation is possible via the flouting of the maxim of quality.

Conclusion

We have arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Decontextualization is registered in all of the subcorpora; thus, the assumption can be formed that this is a universal pragmatic trait within political discourse.

2. There are three necessary, but not sufficient, conditions for decontextualization to occur: the decontextualized event is tied to the past; a lexeme with indefinite referential meaning is used; the speaker's intention to decontextualize an expression has to be clearly present.

3. The decontextualization strategy serves different functions but is mostly used as a mechanism of saving face of a sovereign or writer/speaker, or the group that they belong to, or as a mechanism to make a political opponent lose face.

4. There is a strategy of partial decontextualization which entails the mentioning of only one piece of information while keeping other pieces of information secret.

5. In certain cases, the vagueness of the statements can lead to doubting the truthfulness of the utterances.

6. The strategy of decontextualization is based on the flouting of the Gricean maxims of quality, quantity and manner.

7. Even though the main characteristics of the used strategies are the same across all the subcorpora, each of the corpora showcases its own particularities when it comes to using decontextualization as a pragmatic strategy.

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Pewnego dnia jakiś zły człowiek. Inferencjalność wyrażen w tekstach politycznych i prawnych w historii języka serbskiego

W artykule diachronicznie badamy pragmatyczną dekontekstualizację fraz w tekstach politycznych i prawnych w języku serbskim. Stosujemy podejście „od funkcji do formy”. Analizujemy frazy zawierające nieokreślone terminy referencyjne. Korpusy składają się z: (a) aktów i listów władców serbskich (czasy średniowieczne); (b) korespondencji z okresu powstań serbskich (początek XIX wieku); (c) notatek stenograficznych (koniec XIX wieku). Funkcja badanych fraz pozostaje stabilna w obrębie subkorpusów. Naruszenie maksym Grice’a dotyczących jakości, ilości i sposobu występuje wtedy, gdy mówiący/nadawca chce uniknąć bezpośredniego nazwania osoby lub bezpośredniego umiejscowienia zdarzenia w dokładnych ramach czasowo-przestrzennych. Frazy te pełnią różne funkcje pragmatyczne: (a) strategia „zachowania twarzy” mówiącego (unikanie wzięcia winy na siebie); (b) strategia negatywnej grzeczności – unikanie obarczania winą prominentnych postaci (czasy średniowieczne); (c) strategia unikania odpowiedzialności za wypowiedziane słowa lub podjęte działania; (d) strategia dystansowania się od osoby, o której mowa, i psucia jej reputacji (XIX wiek).

Słowa kluczowe: pragmatyka diachroniczna; język staroserbski; język serbski, fraza nieokreślona; dyskurs polityczny

One day some evil man: Inferentiality of expressions within political and legal texts in the history of the Serbian language

This paper diachronically follows the pragmatic decontextualization of phrases in political and law texts in the Serbian language. We employ the from-function-to-form approach. We analyze phrases containing unspecified referential terms. The corpora consist of (a) charters and letters of Serbian sovereigns (medieval times); (b) Serbian Uprising correspondence (beginning of the 19th century); (c) stenographic notes (end of the 19th century). The function of the scrutinized phrases remains stable throughout the subcorpora. Violation of Grice’s maxims of quality, quantity and manner occurs when the speaker/sender wants to avoid directly naming a person or directly

placing an event in a precise spatial-temporal framework. These phrases execute various pragmatic functions: (a) strategy of “saving the speaker’s face” (avoid taking the blame); (b) strategy of negative politeness – avoid casting the blame onto prominent personages (medieval times); (c) strategy of avoiding responsibility for what was said or done; (d) strategy of distancing oneself from the person who is the being talked about and marring their reputation (19th century).

Keywords: diachronic pragmatics; Old Serbian language; Serbian language; indefinite expression; political discourse

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