

## Overt Subjects in a Consistent Null Subject Language: Bulgarian

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This paper investigates subject use in Bulgarian, a consistent null subject language according to the classification by BIBERAUER, HOLMBERG, ROBERTS & SHEENAN (2010). In such languages overt subjects are rarely used and it is claimed that they are restricted to special contexts of focus and topic-shift. Nevertheless there are occurrences of overt subjects in contexts in which they are unexpected according to the literature. In the following we would like to define these additional contexts on both empirical and theoretical grounds.

Our analysis of spontaneous speech production recordings of Bulgarian natives shows that overt subjects occur in no topic-shift and no focus contexts such as (1) (across-utterance boundaries) and (2), (3) and (4) (within-utterance boundaries) but these occurrences are never obligatory. Camacho (2013) describes a similar phenomenon in Dominican Spanish.

Bulgarian personal pronouns have a strong and a weak overt version although these two types share the same form: the weak overt form and the null pronoun share the same status 'weak' as defined by CARDINALETTI & STARKE (1994). We claim that this is one of the reasons for overt pronouns surfacing in contexts like e.g. (1) and (2). In the case of (1) there are also additional reasons that might enable the overt subject NP: the distance between this NP and its next overt coreferent as well as what we call 'the initial position constraint' (see also (4): if there is a sentence which would otherwise start with a clitic, the overt pronoun should surface initially.

In the case of within-utterance interpretation, there is also evidence from other consistent null subject languages. (Silva 2013) has tested coordination and complement clauses in European Portuguese. According to her results, adults respond categorically to coreference/disjoint reference in coordinations but only show a strong preference (90%) for the same contexts in complement clauses.

### Examples

(1)

(B<sub>1</sub>): Виж, мале кви работи говоря ако ма чуй...  
Look, (part.) what things say1SG *pro*<sub>RE</sub> if *pro* me hears3SG...  
*Oh, my gosh, look what I'm saying! If he could hear me...*

ще ме убие направо!  
*pro*<sub>RE</sub> will me kill3SG definitely!  
*he'd definitely kill me!*

(A): Няма да те чуй, спокойно.  
Won't to you hear3SG *pro*<sub>RE</sub>, relax.  
*'He won't hear you, don't worry!'*

(B<sub>2</sub>): Той ще каже...  
He will say...  
*'He'll say...'*

(2)

И цяла нощ тя вече, тя вече имаше контракции, цяла нощ я  
And whole night she already, she already had contractions, whole night her  
'And she already had, she already had contractions the whole night, I watched her the  
наблюдавах, ма тя не роди на моето дежурство.  
watched 1SG *pro*<sub>RE</sub>, but she not bear in my shift.  
*whole night but she didn't give birth during my shift time.'*

(3)

Тя и моята снаха сега пие, но тя ми казва непознати имена и то  
She and my daughter-in-law now drinks, but she me told unknown names and it  
'Also my daughter-in-law takes now, but she's telling me some unknown names and it's  
като такава.  
like such.  
*like that.'*

(4)

Ама аз я знам, аз нали съм я гледала. Тя е русолява. Знам я, Диди.  
But I her know, I right have her seen. She is blond. Know her *pro*<sub>RE</sub>, Didi.  
'But I know her, I've seen her, right. She's blond. I know her, Didi.'

## References

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