



RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

Psycholinguistic Research in the Scope of Slavic Languages – the Status Quo

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Christina Clasmeier

- 1 Definitions
- 2 The genesis of research questions in psycholinguistics concerning Slavic languages
- 3 Psycholinguistics and Slavic verbal aspect: A challenge

Definitions

- Slavic Languages
- Psycholinguistics
- „The object of psycholinguistics is the human experience and behavior concerning language.“ (Rickheit et al. 2007, 13).
- Methodology:
 - Neurolinguistics: experimental measurement of physiological variables (e.g. EEG, fMRT)
 - Psycholinguistics: empirical measurement of behavioral data (e.g. error rate, reaction time)
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Structuring research questions in psycholinguistics

■ Prominent subareas:

- language processing, language knowledge, language acquisition, (multilingualism)

■ Linguistic subareas

- Phonetics/phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon, semantics, pragmatics

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- “We know a lot of cognitive mechanisms concerning human behavior and experience. Now it is of interest to us, how these mechanisms work when linguistic abilities are in focus.”
- Example:
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- “We have described and analyzed the system of language x, its lexicon and grammar. Now it is of interest to us how this description is related to the mental representation, the processing and the acquisition of this language by its native speakers.”
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2 a. Transfer from other languages

- “The easier way is to take an existing line of research in English (and other languages) and modify it to accommodate Slavic data” (Sekerina 2006, 20).
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- “The more challenging approach is to take a phenomenon specific to Slavic and to try to work out the psycholinguistic analysis for it, including choosing a new hypothesis or technique” (Sekerina 2006, 20f).
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Investigation of how Russian native speakers categorize aspectually different verbs and how they describe the semantic differences between the members of an aspectual pair (Makavchik 2004)

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- The “classical question” (Günther 2000, 1771) of psycholinguistic research on morphology:
 - How is a morphologically complex word form (for example *walk-ed*, or *walk-s*) stored in the mental lexicon and processed during word production and comprehension? Is it stored and accessed as a whole form or decomposed into its morphemes?
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Slavic verbal aspect and the decomposition vs. whole form approach?

First problem

walk < > *walked*

- {*walk*} ({*walk-Ø*}) < > {*walk-ed*}
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pridumat' (pf.) < > *pridumyvav'* (ipf.)
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Is there any reason for the hypothesis that *pridumat'* (pf.) and *pridumyvati'* (ipf.) might be processed differently?

Unlikely, because

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- Roussakova et al. (2002), Makavchik (2004), Gattnar (2013), Clasmeier (in preparation)

- 1 Deriving hypotheses for psycholinguistic investigations from linguistic approaches based on the language system (starting point)
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Thank you for your attention!



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