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THE WAY OF USING ARTICLES IN BULGARIAN BINOMINATIVE SENTENCES

1. *Preliminaries*

The reason behind the presentation of this paper is the book by the well-known Bulgarian linguist K. Ilieva "Binominative sentences and pragmatics" (1996), which focuses on the article usage in Bulgarian binominative sentences (BS). She applies the term BS according to the definition given by Padučeva, where BS are considered as a subclass of the copulative sentences, and represent two NPs (noun phrases) connected to the copula. These sentences have the pattern *NP cop NP*, for instance:

(1)   Mama   e učitelka.
        mummy is teacher
        'Mummy is a teacher.'

K. Ilieva says that when the speaker wants to create a BS, he makes different kinds of intellectual actions[1] according to her intentions. These actions are six in general (see the scheme): identification, specification, characterization, classification, interpretation and nomination, and comparison.

(2)
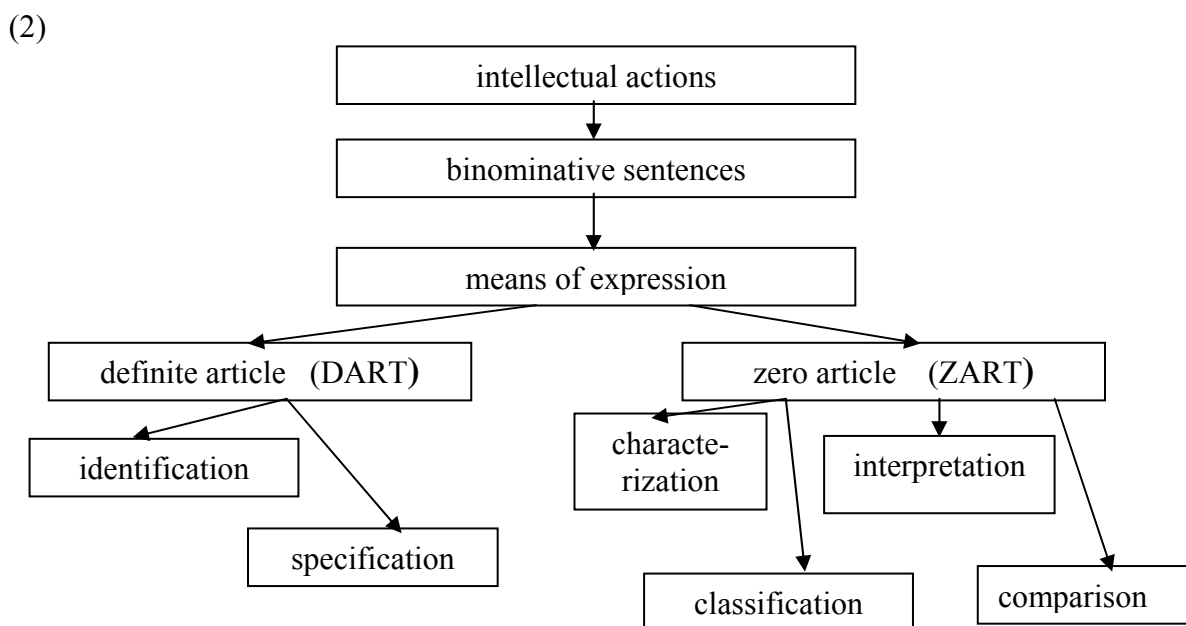
The author divides the intellectual actions into two groups, depending on the presence or absence of the definite article in predicative NP. As a result, the intellectual actions

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[1]   'Intellectual action' is K. Ilieva's translation of the Russian term *rečemyslitel'noe dejstvie.*

of identification and specification are consolidated around the diagnostic phrase "the mentioned *X* is that, who..." and they determine the following structure of the BS.[2]

(3)   DART (NG$_1$) cop   DART (NG$_2$)

The pattern shows that both NPs must be articled, such as:

(4)   Mladata   žena e sâprugata na   učitelja   po   muzika.
         young-the   lady is wife-the prep teacher-the prep music-f.
         'The young lady is the wife of the music teacher.'

The remaining four intellectual actions (characterization, classification, interpretation and comparison) are consolidated around the diagnostic phrase "the mentioned *X* is such, that..." and they determine the following structure of the BS, where the predicative NP is not articled:

(5)   DART (NG$_1$) cop   ZART (NG$_2$)

The pattern shows that the subject NP must be articled, but the predicative one − not, such as:

(6)   Mljakoto   e polezna hrana.
         milk-the/n. is useful   food-f.
         'The milk is healthy food.'

In this way K. Ilieva explains the relationship between the subject NP and the predicative one. She also focuses on the factors which affect the usage of articles within the predicative phrase, in case there are noun extensions such as *PP -> p NP*. K. Ilieva describes different varieties of semantic relations, the so-called *mnemonic codes*. She names about 30, for example: PWR (partitive relation), UPP (unique part of something), UPR (unique possessor in a situation), PAT (person − a modus operandi) etc. Thus, the rules change in the following manner:

(7) $\left\{\begin{array}{l}\text{IDENT}\\\text{SPECF}\end{array}\right\}$ ^ [IER] -> [DART (NG$_1$) cop DART ((A)N$_1$) p ((A)N$_2$)]

The reading is the following: "if the goal of an intellectual action is identification or specification and the relationship between (A)N$_1$ and (A)N$_2$ is that of non-separated affiliation, then they are both articled."

    Without contesting many exact and substantial observations the author has made, the actuality of her purposes or her undoubted erudition, I would like to raise some objections, concerning first of all the effectiveness of the proposed methods for creating BS.

    For example, when the speaker wants to create the BS like (8), he is obliged, first, to determine his communicative purpose, which means to characterize the object under discussion; second, to define how the main noun in the NG$_2$ and its substantive

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[2]   The metalanguage used in the algorithm presentation is defined by K. Ilieva in her book.

extension, namely 'person - role in society' (PRC) are related to one another; and third, to enumerate common presuppositions (CPRES).

(8)   Mojat brat   e direktor na   zavoda.
        my-the brother is chief   prep plant-the
        'My brother is chief executive of the plant.'

Then the speaker has to choose a rule, for instance (9) (see ILIEVA 1996:113) and the desired sentence will be created:

(9)   'if' chart 'and' prc 'and' cpres 'then'
        $DART(NG_1)$ cop $ZART((A)N_1)$ p $DART((A)N_2)$

In my opinion the speaker's intentions would quite rarely be identical with the intellectual actions, described by K. Ilieva. It would not be very easy even for a person who claims to possess some linguistic skills to guess the exact character of the intellectual action. The reason for this is the author's criteria, which need further specification. Sentence (10) (cf. ILIEVA 1996:67) is defined as interpretation, while sentence (11) (ILIEVA 1996:91) - as comparison, which does not seem to be thoroughly convincing:

(10)   Smehât   e veliko tvorčesko načalo.
        laugh-the is great creative start
        'The laugh is a great creative source.'

(11)   Smehât e izvor na   žiznena sila.
        laugh-the is source prep life   force
        'The laugh is a source of vitality.'

Compare also sentence (12) (ILIEVA 1996:69), which is defined as characterization, and sentence (13) (ILIEVA 1996:52), which is defined as interpretation:

(12)   Baštata   na D. e bil   dârvodelec.
        father-the prep D. is be-part./sg/m. carpenter
        'The father of D. used to be a carpenter.'

(13)   Golemijat sin na   Sandre e traktorist.
        elder-the son prep Sandre is tractor-driver
        'The elder son of Sandre is a tractor-driver.'

Another objection I would like to raise refers to the number of articles, treated as a sign of different intellectual actions. In her discussion K. Ilieva mentions the definite article as a marker of definiteness, and the zero article as a marker of indefiniteness. However, there are many instances where the numeral *edin* 'one', and not the absence of the article, is used to express indefiniteness. Many linguists (e.g. PENČEV 1984, IVANČEV 1978, STANKOV 1995, UHLIŘOVÁ 1992, KUFNEROVÁ 1980 and others) give several examples, which illustrate the obligatory usage of indefinite *edin* to denote specificity. Examples of *edin* as an indefinite article in non-specific and especially in generic usage

are fairly numerous. Neglect of this fact may lead to a fragmentary analysis and to unrepresentative conclusions.

My last objection to K. Ilieva's analysis on the matter concerns a certain tendency to include merely the predicative NPs. The author presumes that the subject NP is always articled. Yet this assumption barely corresponds to the linguistic reality. It is true that initial NPs in an objective word order are almost always articled and represent the subject-topic, but indefinite article and zero article can also function in the left-most NPs, even if this usage is much less frequent. In her analysis of sentence (14), the author claims that the initial NP is non-articled because the modifier *vseki* is omitted as a result of the strong definiteness of the NP *čovek*. Similarly, sentence (15) is non-articled due to an omission of *edin* as a result of redundancy. Both of these statements, however, are not precise and are contrary to the empirical material.

(14)   (Vseki) čovek e razumno sâštestvo.
        (Each)   man   is mindful being
        'Man is a sensible being.'

(15)   (Edin) moj prijatel e boks'or.
        (one)   my   friend   is boxer
        'A friend of mine is a boxer.'

2.   On the model of definiteness/indefiniteness

The aim of this paper is to present an alternative way of describing the rules of article usage in BS. My approach is based mainly on the theory of reference and theory of quantification. The theory of language quantification developed during the last decades is closely connected to the semantic category of definiteness/indefiniteness. The theory is based on the fundamental principles of mathematical logic, which determine the span of the subject and predicate in a statement by using a quantifier, which describes the relationships in the internal utterances' structure. These principles are universal for all natural languages. Differences arise due to the different rules of application and different means of expression used in each case. In this respect Bulgarian might be compared with English, French, German or other languages, where there are three kinds of articles – definite (DA), indefinite (IA) and zero article (ZA).

The analysis of the material in Bulgarian shows that exist two ways of using the NPs in the sentence. They are either quantified, which means that a quantifier of existence, universality or a jota-operator determines the NP, or they are beyond the scope of the mentioned quantifiers.

Some linguists, e.g. Barwise and Cooper (1981) state, that every NP must be quantified, others (cf. Koseska-Toszewa & Gargov 1990, Lakova 1987, Stamenov 1987 etc.) insist on the existence of non-quantified NPs. The quantified NPs tend to denote objects from the extra linguistic situation. In other words they are referential. The multitude of denoted objects is divided into three groups depending on the way in which the mind conceives of them:

1. NPs, whose quantifier information may be interpreted as 'there is only one x which is such that it has property $P(x)$.' Such NPs refer to objects from reality, seen as a real subgroup which contains and is equal to the multitude of objects from the extension of the notion, denoted by the noun. Such NPs are marked NP_{un} [+ uniqueness], e.g.:

(16)   [Mâžât s   kostjuma]$_{un}$ e [novijat ni šef]$_{un}$
        man-the prep suit-the   is new-the our boss
        'The man wearing that suit is our new boss.'

2. NPs, whose quantifier information may be interpreted as 'there is at least one such *x*, for which *P(x)* is true.' These NPs denote objects, which are seen as a real subgroup (containing one or more elements) and which are part of – but not equal to – the multitude of objects from the extension of the notion, denoted by the NP. Such NPs are marked *NP$_{ex}$* [+ existence], e.g.:

(17)   [Edin prijatel na   bašta mi]$_{ex}$ e letec.
         one   friend prep father my   is pilot
        'A friend of my father's is a pilot.'

3. NPs, whose quantifier information may be 'for all kinds of *x, P(x)* is true'. Such NPs refer to all objects from the extension of the notion, named by the NP. They are marked NP$_{gen}$ [+generic, +universality], e.g.:

(18)   [Orelât]$_{gen}$ e [ptica]$_{qu}$
         eagle-the   is bird
        'The eagle is a bird'

4. The NPs, which form the forth group, are non-quantified. In the propositional structure such NPs represent the logical predicate and they are used as predicated NPs, which simply signify a notion, property, or quality of an object. Therefore, the reference of these NPs is equal to zero, i.e. they are non-referential. Such NPs are marked *NP$_{qu}$* [+qualitative] (cf. (18).

In Bulgarian the basic means of expressing different kinds of semantic information – quantified or not - are articles: definite article (DA), indefinite article (IA) and zero article (ZA). They have the following specifications, according to Penčev (BOJADŽIEV et. al. 1998):

(19)   DA [*ât* 'the', etc] : Det [+definite]
        IA [*edin* 'a']   : Det [-definite, +specific]
        ZA   : Det [-definite, -specific] / [-definite, +specific]

The following diagram outlines the connection between the articles and the NPs:

(20)
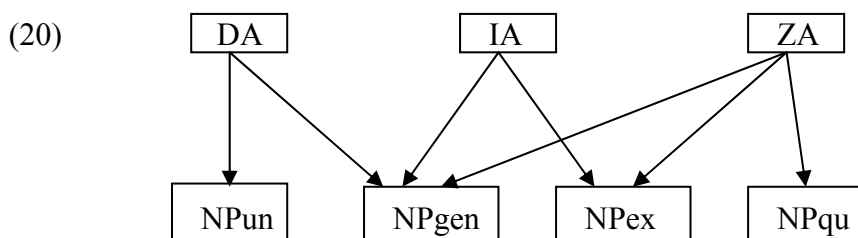
DA can signify uniqueness and universality, IA – universality and existence, ZA – universality, existence and non-quantification. And vice versa – a generic NP can be

expressed by DA, IA and ZA; an existential NP can be expressed by IA and ZA; an unique NP or a qualitative NP can be expressed only by DA and ZA, respectively.

3.   Communicative strategies

Now I will try to explain the existent possibilities for NPs to occur in the initial (subject) position or in the predicative position in the BS. The choice of a NP is determined by the speaker's intention. Through the usage of a NP_{un}, the speaker denotes an object(s) and at the same time presupposes that for the listener this object is also unambiguously denoted due to knowledge from a preceding text or common knowledge. By using an existential NP the speaker in general refers to object(s), which to him are completely individualized and familiar, but which he for some reason does not choose to specify. By using a universal (generic) NP, the speaker refers to the multitude of all objects from the external world, nominated in the same NP. When the speaker chooses a non-quantified, qualitative NP, he informs the listener that he merely uses the NP to signify a notion and not an object.

3.1.   NPs in subject position

When we use such simplified, comprehensible and easy-to-assimilate features of NPs, it will not be too difficult to study which of them could occupy the initial position. Analyses of the excerpted material show that all quantified NPs (universal, existential and unique) occur in this position. Therefore, there are possibilities for all DA, IA and ZA to appear. Models:

(21) $[NP]_{gen}$ cop NP
        a.   DA:
               Hotelite   sa naj-dobroto mjasto za   srešti.
               hotels-the are good-the/sup. Place prep meetings
               'Hotels are the best place to meet.'
        b.   IA:
               Edin hotel e naj-dobroto   mjasto za   srešti.
               one   hotel is good-the/sup. place   prep meetings
               'A hotel is the best place to meet.'
        c.   ZA:
               Hotel v   centâra   na   grada e naj-dobroto   mjasto za   srešti.
               hotel prep center-the prep city-the is good-the/sup. place prep meetings
               'A hotel in the city center is the best place to meet.'

(22) $[NP]_{ex}$ cop   NP
        a.   IA:
               Edin žâlt   hotel v   centâra   na   grada šte bâde mjasto za
               one   yellow hotel   prep center-the prep city-the will be-fut place   prep
               sledvaštata ni   srešta.
               next-the   our meeting
               'A yellow hotel in the city center will be the place we will meet next time.

b.   ZA:
Žâlt   hotel v   centâra   na   grada   šte   bâde mjasto za
yellow-the hotel prep center-the prep city-the will be-fut place prep
sledvaštata ni   srešta.
next-the   our meeting
'A yellow hotel in the city center will be the place we will meet next time.'

(23) [NP]$_{un}$ cop   NP
      a.   DA:
            Žâltijat   hotel v   centâra   na   grada   šte bâde mjasto
            yellow-the hotel prep center-the prep city-the will be-fut place
            za   sledvaštata ni   srešta.
            prep next-the   our meeting
            'The yellow hotel in the city center will be the place we will meet next time.'

3.2. NPs in predicative position

Generic descriptions cannot occur in the predicative function. Even if a universal NP is postposed, such NP implement the comment of the sentence and its final position is merely formal – it keeps its syntactical function of a subject, e.g.:

(24)   Naj-strahlivoto životno e <u>zaekât</u>.
       fearful-the/sup. animal is rabbit-the
       'The rabbit is the most fearful animal.'

There are no obstacles for an existential, unique or qualitative NP to appear after the copula. In other words, a NP articled with DA, IA and ZA can be noticed in the predicative position. Examples:

(25)   ZA: Sestra mi e [blondinka]$_{qu.}$
              sister my is blond
              'My sister is a blond.'

(26)   IA: Mladežât   s   šapkata e [edin student na   bašta mi]$_{ex}$
              youngman-the prep hat-the is one   student prep father my
              'The young man with the hat is one student of my father's.'

(26a) ZA: Čovekât na   spirkata   e [žurnalist ot   radio "Svobodna Evropa"]$_{ex.}$
             man-the prep busstop-the is journalist prep radio Free   Europe
             'The man at the bus stop is a journalist from radio "Free Europe".'

(27)   DA: Majka mi e [edinstvenijat čovek, na   kogoto vjarvam]$_{un}$
             mother my is only-the   person prep whom   trust-1sg/I
             'My mother is the only person whom I trust.'

3.3. Combinations and relations between subject NPs and predicative NPs

As it was shown above, the subject and predicative positions of the BSs could be filled by the following types of NPs:

Subject position: NP_{un}, NP_{ex}, NP_{gen}
Predicative position: NP_{un}, NP_{ex}, NP_{qu}

It is interesting to see which combinations are possible and acceptable from a communicative point of view. Subject NP with generic meaning for instance can be linked with predicative NPs in any combination, e.g.:

(28) $[NP]_{gen}$ cop $\begin{cases} [NP]_{qu} \\ [NP]_{un} \\ [NP]_{ex} \end{cases}$

    a.   Vodata   e [bezcvetna tečnost]$_{qu}$
           water-the is colorless liquid
           'Water is a colorless liquid.'

    b.   Edna majka e [naj-dobrijat prijatel na dâšterja si]$_{un}$
           one mother is good-the/sup. friend prep daughter REFL.
           'A mother is the best friend of her daughter's.'

    c.   Zaekât   e [edno malko životno s dâlgi uši]$_{ex}$
           rabbit-the is one small animal prep long-pl. ears
           'The rabbit is a small animal with long ears.'

In this case the most frequent combination is *NP_{gen} cop NP_{qu}*. This model includes most of Ilieva's intellectual actions as interpretation, classification, and characterization. The usage of existential NP as a predicate (see (28c)) is far less frequent and in some cases even marginal. Furthermore, in these cases it is sometimes not very clear if the predicative NP is an existential NP or in fact a qualitative NP, and the presence of *edin* is only due to redundancy.

    What we noted above about NP_{gen} is also valid for the NP_{un} in the subject position. Such NP could be linked with a qualitative, unique or existential NP as a predicate.

(29) $[NP]_{un}$ cop $\begin{cases} [NP]_{qu} \\ [NP]_{un} \\ [NP]_{ex} \end{cases}$

    a.   Momčeto e [učenik]$_{qu}$
           boy-the is student
           'The boy is a student.'

    b.   Momčeto e [učenikât, za kogoto ti govorih]$_{un}$
           boy-the is student-the prep whom cl-2sg/dat. told-1sg/I
           'The boy is the student I told you about.'

    c.   Mâžât   e [(edin) moj prijatel ot učilište]$_{ex}$
           man-the is (one) my friend prep school
           'The man is a friend from school.'

As I mentioned above, an existential NP can be expressed by IA or ZA. There are some restrictions to the usage of predicative NP_{ex}, articled with IA. When the semantics of the noun includes the meaning of uniqueness (as in *sâprug* in (30)), the usage of IA is impossible, i.e. (30a) is acceptable, but (30b) – not:

(30) a.   Mâžât do prozoreca   e <u>sâprug</u> na   lelja mi.
           man-the prep window-the is husband prep aunt my
           'The man by the window is a husband of my aunt.'
      b.   *Mâžât do prozoreca e<u> edin sâprug</u> na lelja mi.

If in (30b) instead of *sâprug* a noun which does not possess the marker [+ uniqueness] is used, for example *bratovčed* 'cousin', both (31a) and (31b) will be grammatically correct:

(31) a.   Mâžât do prozoreca e<u> bratovčed</u> na lelja mi.
      b.   Mâžât do prozoreca e<u> edin bratovčed</u> na lelja mi.

Let us now focus on the third combination, when a NP_{ex} appear in the subject position. The possibilities are the same as in the previous ones – the subject NP can be linked with a qualitative, unique or existential NP:

(32) $[NP]_{ex}$ cop $\begin{cases} [NP]_{qu} \\ [NP]_{un} \\ [NP]_{ex} \end{cases}$

      a.   Edna moja prijatelka e [prodavačka   v   magazina otsrešta]$_{ex}$
            one my   friend   is shop-assistant prep shop-the opposite
            'A friend of mine is a shop-assistant at the shop across the street.'
      b.   Edna moja lelja e [naj-dobrata   gotvačka, kojato poznavam]$_{un}$
            one my   aunt is good-the/sup. cook-f.   who   know-1sg/I)
            'One of my aunts is the best cook I know.'
      c.   Edna moja prijatelka e [lekarka]$_{qu}$
            one my   friend-f. is doctor-f.
            'A friend of mine is a doctor.'

Some linguists state that a NP like *prodavačka v magazina* (cf. (32a)) should not be considered as existential, but instead as non-quantified, because such a NP shows merely the subject's property. There are good reasons for such opinions. The classification of an NP as existential or qualitative very often depends on the length of the whole noun group. For example, if *žurnalist ot radio "Svobodna Evropa"* (cf. (26a)) can be defined without question as existential, and only *žurnalist* – undoubtedly as qualitative, then for NPs like *izvesten žurnalist* 'a well-known journalist' or *žurnalist ot radioto* 'a journalist from the radio', both interpretations are possible. Furthermore, my aim is not to give a definite answer to the problems discussed, but rather to give some suggestions for possible criteria.

4.   Final remarks

I have tried to present a logical and systematic approach concerning the way of using articles in Bulgarian binominative sentences. This approach would be effective in practice, because it is based on the real communicative intentions of the speaker. Either type of article (IA, DA or ZA) is used depending on the semantic information which the speaker wants to provide. The structural elements of the various NPs may influence article usage, but they nevertheless remain internal to the NP and have a limited effect in comparison to the relationship between the subject NP and the predicative one. I am far away from considering this research as exhaustive, since such a task would be beyond the scope of this paper.

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