

# Predicative adjectives in some Germanic and Slavic languages: On the role of metonymy in extending grammatical constructions

---

**Brdar, Mario; Brdar-Szabó, Rita; Gradečak-Erdeljić, Tanja; Buljan, Gabrijela**

*Source / Izvornik:* **Suvremena lingvistika, 2001, 51-52, 35 - 57**

**Journal article, Published version**

**Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)**

*Permanent link / Trajna poveznica:* <https://urn.nsk.hr/urn:nbn:hr:142:032478>

*Rights / Prava:* [Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International/Imenovanje-Nekomercijalno-Bez prerada 4.0 međunarodna](#)

*Download date / Datum preuzimanja:* **2024-12-29**



**FILOZOFSKI FAKULTET**  
SVEUČILIŠTE JOSIPA JURJA STROSSMAYERA U OSIJEKU

*Repository / Repozitorij:*

[FFOS-repository - Repository of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Osijek](#)



**dabar**  
DIGITALNI AKADEMSKI ARHIVI I REPOZITORIJI

UDK 81'367.623  
81'373.612.2  
811.113'367  
811.16'367  
Izvorni znanstveni članak  
Prihvaćeno za tisak

*Mario Brdar, Rita Brdar-Szabó, Tanja Gradečak-Erdeljić,  
Gabrijela Buljan*

### **Predicative adjectives in some Germanic and Slavic languages: On the role of metonymy in extending grammatical constructions\***

It has often been noted that English predicative adjectives frequently find their counterparts in Croatian in items belonging to some other word classes, particularly in verbs and adverbs, although direct structural correspondents do in fact exist. Contextual and/or stylistic factors certainly play an important role here, but we also note that even when there is no contextual pressure, nonadjectival predicates are very frequent. What is more, this peculiar contrast obtains not only between English and Croatian. Some other Slavic languages pattern like Croatian, while Germanic languages seem to be split in this respect, Flemish and Danish being closer to English, and German closer to Slavic languages. It is argued that these contrastive facts can be well motivated by taking into account how much a language relies on metonymy in organizing its predicate–argument structure, specifically in extending the ascriptive construction with predicative adjectives.

---

#### **1. Introduction**

It has often been noted that English predicative adjectives often find their counterparts in Croatian in items that belong to some other word classes, particularly verbs and adverbs, although direct structural correspondents do in fact exist (cf. Ivir 1983: 105). This phenomenon is illustrated by the following set of examples:

---

\* We would like to express our thanks to the following colleagues and friends for providing us with data on their native languages: Frank Brisard (Flemish), Jeanette Landgrebe (Danish), Stephanie Haussner and Ulrich Langanke (German), Elżbieta Górńska (Polish), and Natalia Cseresznyés (Russian).

- (1) a. I am very **adaptable** – to circumstances.  
b. Vrlo **se** lako **prilagođavam** – okolnostima.  
very REFL easily adapt circumstances–DAT
- (2) a. James was **brief** about his adventures.  
b. James **je** vrlo **sažeto govorio** o svojim avanturama.  
James AUX very concisely spoken about his adventures.
- (3) a. He is **certain** to show up.  
b. **Sigurno** će se pojaviti.  
certainly will REFL appear

We may envisage a sweeping explanation cast in terms of influence of contextual and/or stylistic factors (whereby the pressure of translational needs may count among either of these). These factors certainly play an important role here, but we also note that even when there is no contextual pressure, nonadjectival predicates are very frequent as counterparts of English predicative adjectives, regardless of whether the English adjective is deverbal or not. This means that we must look for some more specific causes in order to get a more precise picture.

The data adduced in Part 3 below show that this peculiar contrast obtains not only between English and Croatian: some other Slavic languages pattern like Croatian. This parallelism indicates that the phenomenon in question cannot be just an idiosyncratic artifact of contrasting English with Croatian. Rather, we are encouraged by this lack of cross-linguistic correspondence to look for some deeper-running divergences between English and Slavic languages.

Among the conditions conducive to such differences in the distribution of predicative adjectives between English and Croatian, and most Slavic languages, we could perhaps suggest the fact that the two languages belong to diametrically opposed types as far as the verbal dynamism of the predicate is concerned. This parameter, first discussed by Curme (1931: 22), and later taken up by Praguian scholars such as Mathesius (1961), and Vachek (1961: 135), distinguishes between languages favouring centripetal predicates, where the semantic core is a verb, and languages heavily using centrifugal predicates, where the semantic core of the predicate is displaced from the finite verb to some nonverbal elements (predicative adjectives, nouns, etc.). Croatian is thus considered to exhibit centripetal, dynamic, verbal predicates, while Germanic languages exhibit more centrifugal, non-dynamic and verbo-nominal predicates.

Some predictions that follow from this parameter appear to be corroborated by the distribution of constructions with so-called functional verbs. A large number of semantically bleached German verbs appear in such constructions with deverbal nouns (e. g. *ins Rollen geraten*, *in Bewegung kommen*, etc.). Comparable constructions in English are somewhat less frequent, and predominantly contain NPs, in contrast to German, where the nominalized nouns are introduced by prepositions. These constructions are, on the whole, certainly less frequent in Croatian, but some types are very common.

We could therefore assume that this parameter is responsible for most of the contrasts exhibited in (1–3). However, such an explanation would be unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is too general, as it does not explicitly link the two phenomena. Secondly, it is falsified by some cross-linguistic facts. German, which is assumed to be on the centrifugal pole of the parametric continuum, and in some respects (cf. functional verb constructions) is even more centrifugal than English, is shown below to behave like Slavic languages in that it systematically fails to exhibit adjectival counterparts. Further, the fact that predicative adverbs (or predicatively used prepositional phrases) frequently appear as counterparts of adjectives is left unaccounted, because these are centrifugal constructions too. Finally, centrifugal predicates with functional verbs usually contain deverbal nouns or adjectives, however, we find that adjectival predicates are avoided even where there is no such morphological link. In other words, if we say that English centrifugal predicates are “derived” from verbal ones, and that Croatian (and other languages) simply fall back on simpler forms, it is not clear why this should happen when there is no such link, i. e. even when the English predicative adjective is morphologically simple or at least not deverbal.

In the present study we shall first demonstrate that the type of contrast exhibited in (1–3) above also obtains between English and some other Slavic languages, viz. Polish and Russian, while Germanic languages seem to be split in this respect, Flemish and Danish being closer to English, and German closer to Slavic languages. We shall be concentrating here on a broad semantic class of adjectives exemplified by *brief* in (2). *Brief* and other adjectives in this group refer to an implicit activity, either linguistic, cognitive or emotive, although they explicitly mention only the manner in which it is performed.

The paper is structurally organized as follows. In Part 2, we first put forward a hypothesis about the metonymic nature of constructions illustrated in (1–3), and then run some more English examples of one of these – the MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY type of predicational metonymy illustrated in (2). We present in Part 3 data from the other six languages under study and relate them to the extent to which underlying conceptual metonymies are licensed in the formation of alternative valency frames of matrix predicates, as well as to the type of active zone specification these metonymies require. Our findings are summed up in Part 4.

## **2. English ascriptive constructions with predicative adjectives and MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY metonymy**

### **2.1. On metonymies in cognitive linguistics**

It is our contention that the contrastive facts that emerge can be accounted for in a more systematic and principled fashion than is the case in statements involving stylistic and contextual factors, but also in a far more specific way than happens in the case of centrifugal vs. centripetal parameter. Not an insignificant number of such cases, along with certain other constructions involved

predicative adjectives, can be well motivated by recognizing that they crucially have to do with how much a language relies on metonymy in organizing its predicate–argument structure, specifically in extending the ascriptive construction with predicative adjectives.

Let us first briefly sum up a couple of relevant points concerning the role and place of metonymy in the cognitive linguistic framework. To adopt a cognitive linguistic approach to metonymy means that all linguistic instances of the phenomenon traditionally called metonymy are reflexes of deeper running conceptual metonymies. Conceptual metonymy, just like metaphor, is one of the most basic and ubiquitous cognitive processes that closely link all our thinking, speaking and acting. The two cognitive processes are frequently contrasted with respect to two central points of difference.

Metaphor is based on similarity, whereas metonymy is based on contiguity (cf. Ullmann 1962: 212, Taylor 1989: 122). Metaphors are, in fact, often considered to be shortened similes, i. e. two entities are again compared but there are no function words making the comparison explicit. In other words, something is described by stating another thing with which it is implicitly compared:

- (4) a. Her words *stabbed at* my heart.  
b. A *flood* of protests poured in following the chairman's announcement.

Metonymy, on the other hand, is traditionally approached as a stand–for relationship that is, unlike metaphor, not based on similarity but on contiguity or proximity. Contiguity is taken in its broadest sense to cover all associative relations except similarity. This means that metonyms are expressions that are used instead of some other expressions because the latter are associated with or suggested by the former:

- (5) a. *The White House* declined to comment on the issue.  
b. Keep your *eye* on the ball!

In the two examples above, the expressions *the White House* and *your eye* are metonyms used for *the U. S. President and his advisers* and *your gaze*, respectively.

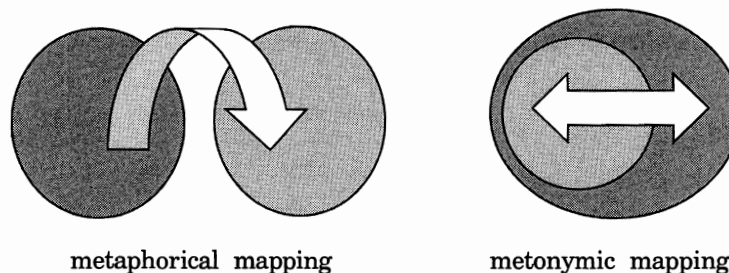
Synecdoche is a figure of speech that is sometimes distinguished from metonymy. In this case, an expression referring to a part is used to refer to some larger whole, e. g.:

- (6) At this point *strings* take over.

Here the expression *strings* refers to stringed instruments, i. e. a word referring to a part of a certain type of instruments is used to denote the whole instrument. Synecdoche may, however, be considered a subtype of metonymies.

The other important point of contrast concerns the number of conceptual domains involved. The standard view is that a metonymic mapping occurs within a single domain, while metaphoric mapping takes place across two dis-

crete domains. It is also possible for metonymic mapping to occur within a single domain matrix which involves a number of subdomains (cf. Croft 1993: 348). In other words, metonymic mapping across different domains within a single domain matrix, involving the conceptual effect of domain highlighting, is also possible. The differences between the two types of mappings can be presented schematically as follows:



As for the nature of the metonymic mapping, Kövecses and Radden (1998: 39) note that it is “a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity, the vehicle, provides mental access to another conceptual entity, the target, within the same domain, or ICM [Idealized Cognitive Model]”. One of the most important aspects of this definition is that metonymy provides mental access to a conceptual entity that need not be otherwise readily and easily accessible. Figuratively speaking, metonymy is an efficient mental shortcut making it possible for us to refer to entities for which there are no current or convenient (in the sense of being short and compact) linguistic expressions.

Another crucial aspect of a cognitive approach to metonymy is that it is not reduced to just one type of mapping, i. e. whole for part, illustrated in (5) a. The figure above, indicating that mapping can proceed in both directions, makes it possible to subsume the traditional synecdoche, i. e. part for whole mapping (6), as well as include a third mapping where part stands for another part within the same domain or Idealized Cognitive Model, as in (6) b.

Within the framework of a pragmatic typology of metonymies proposed in Panther and Thornburg (1999: 335f), constructions like the one illustrated in (5–6) are characterized as a propositional metonymy. These actually come in two subtypes: in a referential metonymy, exemplified in (5–6) above and in (7) below, one referring expression, usually a noun phrase, is the vehicle for an implied target that is also a referring expression normally realized as a noun phrase.

- (7) When Toru Ogawa was called to a uranium-processing plant in *Tokaimura*, Japan, on Sept. 30, 1999, the young firefighter assumed it was a minor emergency. According to the initial call, a worker at the facility, located just outside Tokyo, had fainted. But what Ogawa encountered

was a major disaster – the worst nuclear accident in Japan’s history. Workers at the plant had mishandled uranium-235, causing high levels of radioactivity to spread throughout the site and into the town itself. Japan has a fairly good nuclear-safety record. Still, the government has moved to toughen standards. After *Tokaimura*, the Nuclear Safety Division doubled the number of safety inspectors and gave them more authority. [Newsweek 02/10/2000 45]

In (7) we witness a garden variety of referential metonymy where a noun which inherently denotes a place is used to denote a universally or locally salient event that occurred in the locality named.

In a predicational metonymy, illustrated in (2) a. above and in (8) below, one propositional content stands for another propositional content.

(8) a. Well, look, I mean, abortion is an issue where Governor Bush has been pretty *clear*. [CNN, Crossfire, October 2, 2000]

b. If you feel a little bit *clearer* today about your precise place in the world, you may be right. [Time May 22 2000 69]

c. “He came here and found a president who was very *clear* that there was not going to be any reward for what they had done,” says a senior U. S. administration official. [Newsweek 19/07/1999 14]

## 2.2. On the metonymic nature of extended ascriptive construction

It could be claimed that there is a more global type of metonymy at work here, one that may be called STATE-FOR-EVENT metonymy. We suggest that the ascriptive construction, ubiquitous in many languages, creates in Germanic languages a system that partly runs parallel to the tense-aspect-mood system and partly complements it (cf. Brdar-Szabó & Brdar 2001). It is well known that the resources of the English tense-aspect-mood system allow the speaker to refer to actual, more generalized or only potential situations, but there are certain limits. One can refer to a potential event by using the so-called habitual or timeless present, but it is more difficult to refer to a potential event in the past. The ascriptive constructions with predicative adjectives, derived from or related to verbs, on the other hand, provide, among other things, a way of referring to more generic situations regardless of the time reference.

A subsequent attachment of a complement to the adjective may produce the metonymic effect of particularizing the situation, and thus make the predicate again refer to a more specific and immediate situation while still expressing a certain degree of generality. In fact, in many cases the presence of a complement does not seem to be a necessary precondition for the metonymy, but it makes it quite obvious.

This effect of reversing generality is the reason to call this system complementary to the system of verbal predicates. It is a conveniently vague way of

referring to both the event and the subject's state at the same time. Depending on the kind of state named by the adjective, we can distinguish various subtypes of this general metonymy. It can be PROPENSITY-FOR-ACTIVITY, as for example in *She was critical about my proposal*, or MANNER/PROPERTY-FOR-ACTIVITY, as in (2) and (4–6) above, and possibly some other types that future research will discover.

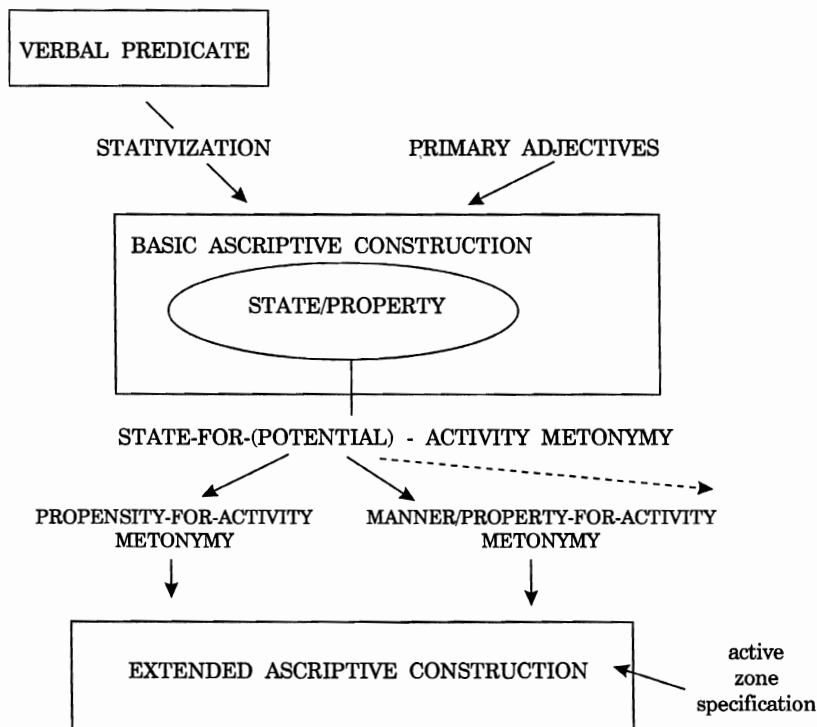
We propose to call the latter type MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY for short (cf. Brdar & Brdar-Szabó 2000), since it is the manner of the targeted activity that becomes more prominent. Although the typology of metonymy producing relationships by Radden and Kövecses (1999) does not explicitly provide for the specific metonymy in these examples, it may provisionally be characterized as a configuration relating whole ICMs and conceptual entities that function as their parts. More precisely, a part of an event stands for the whole event.

Languages that have generally developed fewer types of productive centrifugal predicative constructions, specifically adjectival constructions with complements, lack the structural precondition for the metonymic extension to set in, and are more likely to fall back on verbal predicates, as shown in the Croatian examples in (1–3). Various elements added to the predicative adjectives, complements or adjuncts, can be seen as active zone specifiers (Langacker 1995), i. e. elements prompting a metonymic interpretation. Cf. the prepositional phrase in (2) a. and the infinitive particle in (3) a. above. There are, as will become evident from Part 3, significant cross-linguistic differences concerning what can function as a specifier, i. e. whether it functions as a complement or rather as an adjunct as well as concerning its morphosyntactic form.

Metonymy, once admitted into a linguistic system as a way of forming new predicative expressions or their new variants (i. e. alternative predicate-argument structures), in turn makes possible rise of new centrifugal predicates. This effectively means that the situation observed here is a result of a constellation of factors, mutually reinforcing each other's effect, and producing new cases of grammaticalization. We would like to claim that one factor will not do without the other.

To recapitulate, the starting point for the metonymic extension is the basic ascriptive construction with predicative adjectives which can be derived from or related to verbal predicates, or be primary adjectives, i. e. be simple and morphologically unrelated to verbs or other predicative expressions. This basic ascriptive construction serves as the input for STATE-FOR-EVENT or STATE-FOR-(POTENTIAL-)ACTIVITY metonymy, and the resulting construction in turn serves as the input for more specific metonymic extensions, which may be prompted by extending the ascriptive construction, i. e. by the addition of some phrases or clauses functioning as complements of adjectives, or as adjuncts. The former case leads ultimately to the conventionalization and grammaticalization of the metonymic path and brings about additional polysemy of the predicative adjective. This is schematically presented in figure 1 below:





In the present paper, however, we set ourselves a more modest goal: to account for a fraction of data, viz. for the type of constructions illustrated in (2) above, as cases of a more specific type of metonymy we call **MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY**. This case study, we claim, has a bench-marking effect because the metonymy in question is very similar to the **PROPENSITY-FOR-ACTIVITY** type (which may be even easier to account for in terms of metonymic extensions), and because it ultimately lets us pass judgments about the robustness and plausibility of the more general type of metonymy briefly discussed above.

### 2.3. **MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY** metonymy and English predicative adjectives

In this part of the paper we first present the set of English predicative adjectives in whose counterparts in other languages we are interested.

- (9) a. At least, I've been *open about* it.  
 b. Sheila wasn't very *definite on* the point.  
 c. Yes – and be *direct about* the effect of his work.
- (10) a. He was most *earnest about* it.  
 b. I am not yet *clear as to* the purpose of our Unknown host.
- (11) a. Mother was very fine and *dignified about* it all.  
 b. 'He's really been very *intelligent about* the whole thing,' said Tommy.

What these, otherwise heterogenous, predicative adjectives seem to have in common is that they refer to the manner in which an activity is performed. The activity is sometimes referred to explicitly in the complements of adjectives, but more frequently only inferable from them or from the larger context. The notion of manner is to be understood here in a very broad sense, including also indications of whether an activity took place or not, etc.

The adjectives can be classified into three subgroups, according to the type of activity involved. These activities may range from rather physical aspects of one's behaviour to less tangible ones, to emotive reactions, to cognitive activities and to linguistic actions (primarily speaking, but also including communication in writing). These can occasionally be quite difficult to keep apart, which is no wonder concerning the intimate links between thinking and behaviour on the one hand, and between thinking and speaking on the other.

A series of arguments can be offered to show that constructions with predicative adjectives like the ones in (9–11) are indeed based on the MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY metonymy. We can only afford to mention three most prominent ones.

Firstly, we note that most adjectives used here as vehicles of metonymies refer to basic-level properties (*clear, firm, open, etc.*). On the other hand, the targets of metonymies appear to be non-basic-level actions, i. e. particular ways of speaking, behaving, or thinking, for which no compact lexical items are readily available in most languages, excepting of course some verbs that denote the physical manner of speaking. MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY metonymy is thus a way of providing access to non-basic-level concepts via basic-level ones.

Secondly, we note that the targets of the predicational metonymies may surface in the broader context. They are frequently found in a neighbouring sentence or clause:

- (12) Wolf, the president, I think, was exquisitely *clear* when he *said* right from the beginning, we will go offer these terrorists and we will draw no distinction between them and the countries that harbor them and give them aid and comfort.

Similarly, a non-verbal expression explicitly or implicitly referring to the domain in question may appear in the broader context. Cf. example (13) in which the NP *an account like this* justifies the assumption that *precise about* stands metonymically for a linguistic action verb (either of spoken or of written communication):

- (13) I mean a kind of light-in-the-being, a thing difficult to be *precise about*, especially in *an account like this*, where so many cantankerous erroneous silly and delusive objects, actions and phenomena are in the foreground.

Thirdly, we observe that most of the predicative adjectives in the construction under consideration take prepositional complements introduced by *about*, which provides a clue as to the targeted verbs of linguistic action, or verbs of cognitive or emotive activities, since this same preposition frequently introduces prepositional complements of verbs of linguistic action such as *speak* or *talk*, or of verbs of cognitive activity, e. g. *think about, etc.*

### 3. MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY metonymy in Germanic and Slavic languages

Now that we have provided some background on this type of metonymy, we proceed to consider how this particular type of metonymy is represented in some Germanic and Slavic languages. We base our discussion on the equivalents of English constructions in (9–11) above in three Germanic and three Slavic languages.

#### 3.1. Germanic languages

##### 3.1.1. Flemish and Danish

As might have been expected, Flemish and Danish come close to English in terms of correspondences that can be observed here, particularly with respect to adjectives used to refer to linguistic action. Cf. sets (14) and (15), respectively:

- (14) a. Ik ben er tenminste *open over* geweest.  
I am there at least open about been.  
'At least, I've been open about it.'
- b. Sheila was niet erg *precies/duidelijk op/over* dit punt.  
Sheila was not very precise/clear on/about this point.  
'Sheila wasn't very *definite on* the point'
- c. Ja – en bespreek *onmiddellijk/zonder omwegen* het effect van  
Yes – and address directly/without deviances the effect of  
zijn werk.  
his work.  
'Yes – and be *direct about* the effect of his work'
- (15) a. I detmindste har jeg været *ærlig* omkring det.  
in the least have I been honest about it.
- b. Sheila var ikke særlig *klar* omkring det.  
Sheila was not particular(ly) clear about it.
- c. Ja – og være *direkte* hvad angår effekten af  
Yes – and be-INF/IMP straight what concerns effects-DEF of  
hans arbejde.  
his work.

The first two examples in both Flemish and Danish are structurally identical to the English constructions since they exhibit predicative adjectives followed by prepositional phrases that look like genuine complements. One important difference, however, is that Danish seems to use *omkring*, a more general preposition comparable to English *concerning*. This means that Danish PPs are somewhat less complement-like.

However, in some cases Flemish defaults to explicit mention of the targeted verb of linguistic action, i. e. *bespreek* in (14) c., while in the same situation

Danish uses a predicative adjective followed not by a prepositional complement but an adverbial clause specifying the subject matter that directness refers to.

Like English, Flemish also appears to exhibit constructions with predicative adjectives complemented by prepositional adjectives in the domain of cognitive action, although the counterpart of *clær* apparently appears in an impersonal construction:

- (16) a. He was most *earnest* *about* it.  
Hij was erg oprecht/ernstig *daarover*  
'He was very earnest/serious about it'
- b. Het doel van onze Onbekende gast is me nog niet *duidelijk*.  
The purpose of our Unknown host is me not yet clear.  
'I am not yet *clear as to* the purpose of our Unknown host'

The Danish equivalents are in both cases prepositionally expanded:

- (17) a. Han var meget ærlig omkring det.  
he was very honest about it.
- b. Jeg er stadig ikke helt klar over hvad formal vores ukendte  
I am still not quite clear over what purpose our unknown  
vært har.  
host has

In fact, in (17) b. Danish seems to closely follow English in exhibiting a clear example of prepositional complement, this time introduced by *over*.

However, we note that in the domain of general behaviour the most natural Flemish translations now refer explicitly to verbs denoting behaviour and the English adjectives are here rendered as adverbs. Prepositional phrases that follow function as adjuncts. In fact, even the constructions with predicatively used adjectives in the domain of cognitive action above sound more natural if followed by such adjunct-like prepositional phrases as *met betrekking tot* 'with respect to':

- (18) a. Moeder gedroeg zich erg edel en *waardig* in dit alles.  
Mother behaved REFL very fine and dignified in this all.  
'Mother was very fine and *dignified about* it all'
- b. 'Hij is werkelijk erg *verstandig* geweest in de hele affaire,'  
'He is really very intelligent been in the whole affair,'  
zei Tommy.  
said Tommy.  
'He's really been very intelligent about the whole thing,' said Tommy.

Danish counterparts of this subtype of constructions happen to be paraphrases without any predicative adjectives. Instead, there are related adverbs/adverbials following more or less general verbs of behaviour:

- (19) a. Mor tog det hele meget pænt og værdigt.  
Mother took it all very nicely-ADV and dignified-ADV

- b. Han har virkelig klartet det helle godt, sagde Tommy.  
He has really handled it all well, said Tommy.

### 3.1.2. German

There is apparently only one German counterpart in the domain of linguistic action, (20) a. ', that appears to exhibit a prepositional phrase complementing a predicative adjective and specifying the active zone. However, it is felt by native speakers to be rather colloquial. The variant with a verb of linguistic action followed by an adverb that corresponds to the English predicative adjective is more widely used. In both cases the preposition is *über* 'about/over', which is ubiquitous in the function of introducing complements. Otherwise, we note that German makes use of prepositional adjuncts, which can be paraphrased by adverbial clauses, or, simply, reverts to the explicit mention of the targeted verbs:

- (20) a.' Ich war ja wenigstens offen darüber.  
I was well at-least open it-about
- a." Ich habe ja wenigstens offen darüber gesprochen.  
I AUX well at-least open-ADV it-about spoken
- a."" Ich war ja wenigstens offen, als ich darüber sprach.  
I COP well at-least open when I it-about spoke
- b.' Sie war nicht sehr entschlossen bei diesem Punkt.  
She COP not very definite at this point
- b." Sie sprach nicht sehr entschlossen über diesen Punkt.  
She spoke not very definitely about this point
- c.' \*Ja, und sei direkt/ganz offen über den Effekt seiner Arbeit.  
Yes, and be direct very open about the effect his-GEN work
- c." Ja, und sei direkt (ganz offen) im Zusammenhang mit dem Effekt  
Yes, and be direct very open in connection with the effect  
seiner Arbeit.  
His-GEN work
- c."" Ja, und sprich ganz offen über den Effekt seiner Arbeit.  
Yes and speak quite openly about the effect his-GEN work
- c."" Ja, und sei direkt (ganz offen), wenn du mit ihm über den Effekt  
Yes and be direct quite open when you with him about the effect  
seiner Arbeit sprichst.  
his-GEN work speak

Most natural German counterparts in both the domain of cognitive action and of behaviour domain, are again constructions explicitly mentioning the targeted verbs followed by adverbs of manner corresponding to the English adjectives. The closest that German seems to come to the English constructions in (9–11), is the occasional use of prepositional phrases of the 'concerning/with

respect to' type as adverbials after adjectives. Interestingly, in rendering *clear* as a MANNER-FOR-COGNITIVE-ACTIVITY metonymy, German makes use in (22) b." of a SEEING-IS-UNDERSTANDING metaphor:

- (21) a. \*Er war sehr ernst darüber.  
 he COP very earnest it-about
- a.' Er meinte es sehr ernst.  
 he thought it very earnest-ADV
- b.' Ich bin mir noch nicht im klaren über  
 I COP me-DAT still not in clear about  
 das Ziel des unbekanntem Gastgebers.  
 the purpose the-GEN unknown host-GEN
- b." Ich sehe noch nicht klar hinsichtlich  
 I see still not clear-ADV concerning  
 des Ziels des unbekanntem Gastgebers.  
 the-GEN purpose-GEN the-GEN unknown host-GEN
- (22) a.' Mutter war sehr feinfühlig (dezent) und würdevoll in Bezug  
 mother COP very decent and dignified in relation  
 auf das alles.  
 on that all
- a." Mutter verhielt sich sehr feinfühlig und würdevoll hinsichtlich  
 Mother behaved REFL very decently and dignified-ADV concerning  
 der ganzen Sache.  
 the-GEN whole matter
- b.' \*Er war wirklich sehr intelligent in dieser Situation.  
 he COP really very intelligent in this situation
- b." Er verhielt sich wirklich sehr klug hinsichtlich dieser  
 He behaved REFL really very cleverly concerning this-GEN  
 Situation.  
 situation

### 3.2. Slavic languages

#### 3.2.1. Croatian

Croatian counterparts of the above English sentences in (9–11) may boast a predicative adjective, but, unlike English examples, they hardly exhibit prepositional phrases as the complements of adjectives. Variant b." of (23) is at best doubtful for most native speakers, but genuine PP complements in most of these examples would be downright ungrammatical. Note that the NPs following the preposition are headed by a pronoun. If the NP is headed by a full lexical noun, the prepositional phrases become considerably worse. All other PPs following adjectives are in fact adjuncts. Most natural counterparts are predicative adjectives followed by finite adverbial clauses specifying the activity in question, or more compact monoclausal counterparts where the English ad-

jective is rendered as an adverb (functioning as a manner adjunct) and the activity is explicitly named by the verbal part of the predicate:

- (23) a.' Barem sam o tome otvoreno govorio.  
At-least AUX about that openly spoken
- a." Barem sam bio otvoren glede toga.  
At-least AUX COP open concerning that
- b.?' Sheila nije bila vrlo određena kada je o tome govorila.  
Sheila NEG-COP very definite when AUX about that spoke
- b.?" Sheila nije bila vrlo određena o tome.  
Sheila NEG-COP very definite about that
- c. I da – govori izravno o učinku njegovog djela.  
and yes speak directly about effect his-GEN work-GEN
- (24) a. Ozbiljno je to mislio.  
Earnestly AUX that thought
- b.' Nije mi još jasna namjera našeg neznanog  
NEG-COP me-DAT still clear purpose our-GEN unknown-GEN  
domaćina.  
host-GEN
- (25) a.' \*Majka je bila jako pristojna i dostojanstvena o tome.  
Mother AUX COP very fine and dignified about that
- a." Majka je bila jako pristojna i dostojanstvena glede toga.  
Mother AUX COP very fine and dignified concerning that
- a.?" Majka se glede toga ponašala jako pristojno i  
Mother REFL concerning that behaved very fine-ADV and  
dostojanstveno.  
dignified-ADV
- b.' \*'Zaista je bio vrlo inteligentan o tome,' rekao je Tommy  
Indeed AUX COP very intelligent about that said AUX Tommy
- b.?" 'Zaista se inteligentno ponio glede toga/ što se toga  
Indeed REFL intelligent-ADV behaved concerning that as-for that  
tiče,' rekao je Tommy.  
concerns said AUX Tommy

### 3.2.2. Polish

Polish is very similar to Croatian in not allowing prepositional phrases as complements to follow predicative adjectives referring to an implicit activity. Instead, alternative constructions follow the same pattern we have established for Croatian: the activity in question is explicitly named by a verb, and the English adjective is rendered as an adverb of manner. Prepositional phrases are allowed as genuine complements of verbs or of complex verbo-nominal ex-

pressions, as for example in (28) b.'. In rendering *clear* as a MANNER-FOR-COGNITIVE-ACTIVITY metonymy in (27) b., the SEEING-IS-UNDERSTANDING metaphor crops up in Polish in (27) b." too:

- (26) a.' \*Przynajmniej byłem o tym otwarty.  
at-least was-1SG about it open.
- a." Przynajmniej mówiłem o tym otwarcie.  
at-least spoke-1SG about it openly-ADV
- b.' \*Sheila nie była bardzo zdecydowana w tym punkcie.  
Sheila NEG was very definite/decided in this point.
- b." Sheila nie była zbyt pewna, kiedy o tym mówiła.  
Sheila NEG was too-much sure, when about it spoke.
- c.' \*Tak – i bądź wprost o efektach jego pracy.  
yes – and be direct about effects his-GEN work-GEN
- c." Tak – i o efektach jego pracy mów wprost.  
yes – and about effects his-GEN work-GEN speak-2SG  
wprost.  
directly.
- (27) a. \*Był najbardziej szczerzy o tym.  
he-was most earnest about it-LOC.
- a.' Był najbardziej szczerzy w tej sprawie.  
was most earnest in this-LOC matter.
- a." Był najbardziej szczerzy, kiedy mówił o tym.  
was-3SG most earnest, when talked-3SG about it-LOC
- a.'" Mówił o tym najbardziej szczerze.  
spoke-3SG about it-LOC most sincerely
- b. \*Nie jestem jeszcze jasny jeśli chodzi o cel  
NEG be-1SG yet clear as-far-as goes about aim-ACC  
naszego Nieznanego gospodarza.  
our Unknown host
- b.' Nie mam jeszcze jasności jeśli chodzi o  
NEG have-1SG yet clarity as-far-as it-goes about  
cel naszego Nieznanego gospodarza.  
aim-ACC our Unknown host
- b." Nie widzę jeszcze jasno celu  
NEG see-1SG yet clearly aim-GEN  
naszego Nieznanego gospodarza.  
our Unknown host
- (28) a. \*Matka była bardzo dokładna i górnolotna  
Mother was very exact/fine and dignified



o tym wszystkim.  
about it all.

a.' Matka mówiła o tym wszystkim górnolotnie  
Mother spoke about it all in-high-flown-terms-ADV.  
i była bardzo dokładna.  
and was very exact.

b. \*Rzeczywiście był bardzo inteligentny  
really was-3SG very intelligent  
o tej całej sprawie.  
about this-LOC whole thing/matter

b.' Rzeczywiście wykazał się dużą inteligencją  
really showed-3SG REFL big-INSTR intelligence-INSTR  
o tej całej sprawie.  
about this-LOC whole thing/matter

### 3.2.3. Russian

Russian data are very similar to Croatian ones in one important respect: there are no PPs as genuine complements of predicative adjectives. The specification of the active zone may sometimes be achieved by adjuncts, clausal or phrasal, but these are on the verge of acceptability. Of course, there are many cases in which the targeted verb is explicitly mentioned and followed by an adverbial:

(29) a.' \*В конце концов я был открыт в этом  
\*V konce koncov ja byl otkryt v etom  
in end-PREP end-PL-GEN I was open in this-PREP  
вопросе.  
voprose.  
issue-PREP

a." В конце концов я открыто говорил об этом.  
V konce koncov ja otkryto govoril ob etom.  
in end-PREP end-PL-GEN I open-ADV spoke about this-PREP

a.'" ?В конце концов я был открыт, когда говорил  
?V konce koncov ja byl otkryt, kogda govoril  
in end-PREP end-PL-GEN I was open when spoke  
об этом.  
ob etom.  
about this-PREP

b. ?Соня не была очень решительна в этом вопросе.  
?Sonja ne byla očen' rešitel'na v etom voprose.  
Sonja NEG was very definite in this-PREP matter-PREP

b.' ?Соня не была очень решительна, когда говорила  
?Sonja ne byla očen' rešitel'na, kogda govorila  
Sonja NEG was very definite when spoke

- об этом вопросе.  
ob etom voprose.  
about this–PREP question–PREP
- b.” Соня не говорила очень решительно об этом  
Sonja ne govorila očen’ rešitel’no ob etom  
Sonja NEG spoke very definite–ADV about this–PREP  
вопросе.  
voprose.  
matter–PREP
- c. \*Да, и будь прям об эффекте его работы.  
\*Da, i bud’ prjam ob effekte ego raboty.  
yes and be direct about effect–PREP his work–SG–GEN
- c.’ ?Да, и будь прям, когда говоришь  
?Da, i bud’ prjam, kogda govoriš  
yes and be direct when you–speak  
об эффекте его работы.  
ob effekte ego raboty.  
about effect–PREP his work–SG–GEN
- c.” Да, и говори прямо об эффекте его работы.  
Da, i govori prjamo ob effekte ego raboty.  
yes and speak direct–ADV about effect–PREP his work–SG–GEN
- (30) a. \*Он был очень серьёзен об этом/ по этом  
\*On byl očen’ serjozen ob etom/ po etom.  
he was very earnest about this–PREP/ as–for this–DAT  
поводу.  
povodu.  
occasion–DAT
- a.’ \*Он был очень серьёзен, когда думал об этом.  
\*On byl očen’ serjozen, kogda dumal ob etom  
he was very earnest when thought about this–PREP
- a.” Он очень серьёзно думал/размышлял об этом.  
On očen’ serjozno dumal/razmyšljal ob etom.  
he very earnest–ADV thought about this–PREP
- b. \*Я ещё не ясен о цели непознатого  
\*Ja eščo ne jasen o celi nepoznatogo  
I still NEG clear about purpose–PREP unknown–GEN  
хозяина/ в связи с целью непознатого  
hozjaina/ v svjazi s celju nepoznatogo  
host–SG–GEN in connection–PREP with purpose–INST unknown–GEN  
хозяина.  
hozjaina.  
host–GEN

b.' Я не вижу ещё ясно цели непознатого  
 Ja ne vižu eščo jasno celi nepoznatogo  
 I NEG see still clear-ADV purpose-SG-GEN unknown-SG-GEN  
 хозяина.  
 hozjaina.  
 host-SG-GEN

(31) a. \*Мать была очень тонкого поведения и полна  
 \*Mat' byla očen' tonkogo povedenija i polna  
 mother was very fine-SG-GEN behaviour-SG-GEN and full  
 достоинства об этом.  
 dostoinstva ob etom.  
 dignity-SG-GEN about this-PREP

a.' \*Мать была очень тонкого поведения и полна  
 \*Mat' byla očen' tonkogo povedenija i polna  
 mother was very fine-SG-GEN behaviour-SG-GEN and full  
 достоинства по этому поводу.  
 dostoinstva po etomu povodu.  
 dignity-SG-GEN as-for this-DAT occasion-DAT

a." \*Мать была очень тонкого поведения и полна  
 Mat' byla očen' tonkogo povedenija i polna  
 mother was very fine-SG-GEN behaviour-SG-GEN and full  
 достоинства, как вела себя в этой ситуации.  
 dostoinstva, kak vela sebja v etoj situacii.  
 dignity-SG-GEN as she-behaved REF in this-PREP situation-PREP

a."" Мать вела себя очень тонко/чувствительно и  
 Mat' vela sebja očen' tonko/čuvstvitel'no i  
 mother behaved REF very fine-ADV and  
 с достоинством в этой ситуации.  
 s dostoinstvom v etoj situacii.  
 with dignity-INST in this-PREP situation-PREP

b. \*Он был действительно очень умён/ интеллигентным  
 \*On byl dejstvitel'no očen' umjon/intelligentnym  
 he was really very clever/intelligent  
 обо всём/ по поводу всего этого.  
 obo vsjom/ po povodu vsego etogo.  
 about all-PREP as-for occasion-DAT all-SG-GEN this-SG-GEN

b.' \*Он был действительно очень умён/ интеллигентным, когда  
 \*On byl dejstvitel'no očen' umjon/intelligentnym, kogda  
 he was really very clever/intelligent when  
 он поступал в этой ситуации.  
 on postupal v etoj situacii.  
 he behaved in this-PREP situation-PREP

- b. \*Он был действительно очень умён/ интеллигентным, как  
 \*On byl dejstvitel'no očen' umjon/intelligentnym, kak  
 he was really very clever/intelligent when  
 он поступал в этой ситуации.  
 on postupal v etoj situacii  
 he behaved in this-PREP situation-PREP
- b. \*Он вёл себя действительно очень умно/  
 On vjol sebja dejstvitel'no očen'umno/  
 he behaved REF really very clever-ADV/  
 интеллигентно в этой ситуации.  
 intelligentno v etoj situacii.  
 intelligent-ADV in this-SG-PREP situation-SG-PREP

### 3.3. Overview and discussion of cross-linguistic contrasts

The following table sums up the similarities and differences between the four Germanic and three Slavic languages with respect to the availability of the MANNER-FOR-ACTION type of predicational metonymy with adjectival predicates:

Language	Construction type			
	Verbal predicate modified by adverbial of manner	Adjectival predicate exhibiting metonymy, Active zone is specified by		
		Adverbial clause	Adverbial PP	Complement PP
English	(+)	??	(+)	+
Flemish	+	?	+	(+)
Danish	+	+	+	(+)
German	+	(+)	+	(?)
Croatian	+	(+)	(+)	(??)
Polish	+	(+)	+	-
Russian	+	(+)	(+)	-

Of course, we also note that all languages can make use of paraphrases in which the target verbs or their cognates appear explicitly, followed by an adverb which corresponds to the English predicative adjective, which means that there is no metonymy at all in these languages in such counterparts. These verbal paraphrases, however, have different functional values in different languages.

What clearly emerges from the comparison of the above constructions in the seven languages is that English, Danish and Flemish exhibit this type of me-

tonymy with predicative adjectives complemented by prepositional phrases, although this construction appears to be less heavily exploited in Danish and Flemish. The rest of the languages in the sample hardly allow the adjectives to be complemented in this way, or not at all.

At the same time there is a remarkable degree of similarity between all the languages – they all allow some paraphrases in which the predicative adjective is followed by adverbial structures, realized as clauses or prepositional phrases. The important difference, however, is that while these are possible in English (but statistically speaking underused because the adjective complementation seems to be the preferred variant), in the other Germanic languages these paraphrases are often stylistically much better, or even the default option when complement prepositional phrases being utterly ungrammatical. This way of specifying the active zone of the metonymically extended ascriptive construction is in the Slavic languages in the sample, generally, at best, stylistically awkward, and very often downright unacceptable. These languages systematically avoid metonymy in this part of their system. In other words, here are obvious differences between the languages in the default degree of the schematicity of the structure specifying the active zone, provided they allow the adjective to be used predicatively and exhibit metonymy. As we move downwards in the table, these specifications tend to become more and more elaborate and come closer to revealing the target activity, while in English they are at their most schematic.

A comparison of English with languages like German, Croatian, Polish and Russian shows that the latter languages regularly fail to tolerate polysemy based on metonymy in other constructions as well, e. g. neither of these four languages exhibits a productive use of raising constructions involving predicative adjectives, i. e. subject-to-subject-raising with *certain* or *sure*, and *tough*-construction. The former construction is utterly impossible in German (32) and Croatian (34), while the latter is of very doubtful acceptability and restricted to just certain predicative adjectives:

- (32) a. \*Der Lehrer ist sicher zu kommen  
       DEF teacher is certain to come  
       b. Der Lehrer kommt sicher.  
       DEF teacher comes certainly-ADV
- (33) Das Buch ist interessant zu lesen.  
       DEF book is interesting to read
- (34) a. \*Nastavnik je siguran doći.  
       teacher is certain come-INF  
       b. Nastavnik će sigurno doći.  
       teacher will certainly-ADV come
- (35) ? Knjiga je laka za čitati.  
       book is easy for read-INF

Both constructions, on the other hand, are violently ungrammatical in Polish. Either the adjective is replaced by an adverb, as in (36) b., or the infinitive is replaced by a prepositionally introduced noun nominalization, as in (37) b.:

- (36) a. \*On jest pewny przyjsć.  
he is sure come-INF  
b. Pewne jest, że on przyjdzie.  
certain is that he will-comes
- (37) a. \*Samochód był łatwy naprawiać.  
car was easy repair-INF  
b. Samochód był łatwy do naprawy.  
car was easy for repair-GEN

Flemish and Danish exhibit at least some polysemy with adjectival predicates in productive raising constructions. Cf. the following Flemish example of *tough*-movement:

- (38) De wagen was gemakkelijk te herstellen.  
the car was easy to repair.

English again exhibits here some fairly schematic elements specifying the active zone, i. e. non-finite clauses, or just infinitival particles (cf. Langacker 1995). Both construction types are extremely productive:

- (39) a. Enough devastating warheads were *certain to* get through to ensure economic and political disaster as well as an appalling toll of civilian casualties.  
b. But now that China looks as if it will end up in the WTO, Congress permitting, tariffs are *likely to* fall and quotas rise.  
c. Later in the month Taiwan is scheduled to test its new, U. S.-made Patriot missiles, *sure to* be seen in Beijing as another jab.
- (40) a. The car was *easy to* repair.  
b. The MLS equipment is more precise, permits curving approaches (unlike the rigidly linear ILS-mediated approach) by multiple aircraft over a broader gateway area, and is *cheaper to* operate.  
c. While capsule-stack, metal-cylinder, and quartz barometers are *convenient to* use, their principles of operation are not fundamental, and to make sure their readings are correct they have to be compared with a fundamental device, such as a mercury-column barometer.  
d. As the child matures, social understanding of appropriate distance also develops; it may not merely be *dangerous to* touch or taste, it may be socially inappropriate to get that close.  
e. By contrast, Ms McLachlin's opinions, over her ten-year stint as a Supreme Court justice, have been *harder to* foretell.

#### 4. Conclusions

We hope to have shown that some apparently arbitrary contrastive facts, such as Croatian verbal counterparts of English predicative adjectives, as in (1–3), can be accounted for in a systematic and principled fashion by assuming an interplay of some cognitive and structural factors. We have provided evidence for our claim that such English constructions with predicative adjectives rest on a series of metonymic processes, and that these processes therefore decisively help shape the complementation system of adjectives, partly by motivating the morphosyntactic form of complements. The relative unproductivity of extended ascriptive construction with prepositional nominal complements in some of the languages we examined seems to block the English-type metonymic extension, and if then the active zone cannot be naturally specified by an adverbial (adjunct) phrase or clause following the predicative adjective, and then these languages consequently opt for a verbal predicate. Ultimately there is no conventionalization and grammaticalization of the metonymic path and no additional polysemy of the predicative adjective in these languages.

A comparison of these English constructions with their counterparts in some other Germanic languages and three Slavic languages has shown that most of these languages, and particularly the Slavic ones, regularly fail to tolerate this type of polysemy based on metonymy. English has been demonstrated to rely heavily on metonymic processes in rearranging predicate–argument–structures enabling different construals while at the same time keeping formally one and the same form of the predicative expression. The other languages involved, which may make use of metonymy elsewhere, tend to formally indicate different arrangements in predicate–argument–structure by using formally different predicative expressions. This appears to go hand in hand with conspicuous differences in the kind and degree of the schematicity of the structure specifying the active zone between English on the one hand, and the other three languages, on the other. Unlike in English, these structures tend to be far more elaborated in the other languages and assume the form of adjuncts and not that of arguments.

#### References:

- Brdar, M. (1996). Raising cross-linguistic dust: What can contrastive linguistics do for typology? *Suvremena lingvistika* 41–42: 63–80.
- Brdar, M., R. Brdar-Szabó (1992). How tough is tough-movement to typologize? In: Ch. Mair, M. Markus (eds.) *New Departures in Contrastive Linguistics. Volume 1*. Innsbruck: Institut für Anglistik der Universität Innsbruck, 105–114.
- Brdar, M., R. Brdar-Szabó (2000). Metonymic coding of linguistic action: a cross-linguistic study. Paper presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> International Pragmatics Conference, Budapest, 9–14 July 2000.
- Brdar-Szabó, R., M. Brdar (2001). MANNER-FOR-ACTIVITY metonymy in a cross-linguistic perspective. Paper read at the International Conference *Cognitive Linguistics in the Year 2001*, Łódź, 19.–22. 04. 2001.

- Croft, W. (1993). The role of domains in the interpretation of metaphors and metonymies. *Cognitive Linguistics* 4.4: 335–370.
- Curme, G. O. (1931). *A Grammar of the English Language. Vol. 3: Syntax*. Boston: Heath.
- Goldberg, A. E. (1995). *Constructions: A Construction Grammar Approach to Argument Structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ivir, V. (1983). *A Contrastive Analysis of English Adjectives and Their Serbo-Croatian Correspondents*. Zagreb: Institute of Linguistics, University of Zagreb.
- Kövecses, Z., G. Radden (1998). Metonymy: Developing a cognitive linguistic view. *Cognitive Linguistics* 9.1: 37–77.
- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things. What Categories Reveal about the Mind*. Chicago – London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Langacker, R. W. (1987). *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Volume 1. Theoretical Prerequisites*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. W. (1991). *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar. Volume 2. Descriptive Application*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Langacker, R. W. (1995). Raising and transparency. *Language* 71.1: 1–62.
- Mathesius, V. (1961). *Obsahový rozbor současné angličtiny na základě obecně lingvistického* [A Functional Analysis of Contemporary English on a General Linguistic Basis]. Prague.
- Panther, K.-U., G. Radden (1999). Introduction. In: K.-U. Panther, G. Radden, (eds.) *Metonymy in Language and Thought*. (Human Cognitive Processing 4). Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1–14.
- Panther, K.-U., L. Thornburg (1999). The potentiality for actuality metonymy in English and Hungarian. In: K.-U. Panther, G. Radden, (eds.) *Metonymy in Language and Thought*. (Human Cognitive Processing 4). Amsterdam – Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 333–357.
- Taylor, J. R. (1989). *Linguistic Categorization. Prototypes in Linguistic Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Vachek, J. (1961). Some less familiar aspects of the analytical trend in English. *Brno Studies in English* 3: 31–44.

### *Predikativni pridjevi u nekim germanskim i slavenskim jezicima: O ulozi metonimije u oblikovanju gramatičkih konstrukcija*

Kontrastivna proučavanja predikatnih pridjeva tradicionalno pokazuju da ekvivalenti engleskih predikatnih pridjeva u drugim jezicima često prelaze granice vrsta riječi. Kontekstualni i/ili stilistički čimbenici sigurno igraju određenu ulogu, no čini se da su strukturno nepodudarni ekvivalenti izrazito učestala pojava čak i u slučajevima u kojima ne bilježimo takve pritiske. Može se zamijetiti da je to redovita pojava u velikom broju slavenskih jezika, dok među germanskim jezicima bilježimo odstupanja – flamanski i danski su u ovom pogledu bliže engleskomu nego npr. njemački. U prilogu se pokazuje da se te činjenice koreliraju s raširenošću metonimijskih preslikavanja prilikom sekundarne organizacije predikatno-argumentne strukture, specifično u modifikacijama temeljne askriptivne konstrukcije s predikativnim pridjevima.

Ključne riječi: predikatni pridjevi, pridjevi, metonimija, germanski jezici, slavenski jezici, kognitivna lingvistika