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ON ONE COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION IN THE SERBIAN LANGUAGE

The paper² examines a recently noticed usage of one grammatical calque in the Serbian language (in English: 'the + Adj/Adv^{superlative} + EVER'). The authors contrast the meaning and use of the adverb *ever* in English and the meaning and use of its equivalent in Serbian (*ikad*), taking into account differences among standard and colloquial language. Special attention is given to the impact of English through the media (including the Internet and advertisements), as the analyzed calque is mostly used by young people.

Key words: calque, borrowing, colloquial language, temporal adverbials, *ever*, *ikad*.

Introduction

The paper studies the usage of a grammatical calque resulting from the introduction of the English phrase 'the + Adj/Adv^{superlative} + EVER' into the Serbian language. The analysis includes repartition and structure of this construction type in colloquial English and Serbian, i.e. in the language of media, advertisements and spoken communication of the youth. Additionally, a micro-research conducted for the purpose of the paper has a goal to show if students of the Faculty of Education in Jagodina (Serbia) consider this type of construction normative, and if they recognize it as a calque.

The influence of English on other languages has been the focus of research for a long time (see e.g. GÖRLACH 2003, CRYSTAL 2003, FISHER 2008). Serbian linguists also take part in this kind of debating and research, offering results based on a variety of approaches and methods (e.g. PRĆIĆ

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2011, ČUTURA & ĆIRKOVIĆ-MILADINOVIĆ 2011, MIŠIĆ-ILIĆ & LOPIČIĆ 2011). Still, the focus on dynamic linguistic changes at different levels, especially at the levels of morphology and lexis, seems to be the universal common characteristic of all these papers. As a result, the research material most often includes spoken discourse, internet communication of young people and media language. Our research does not differ from the most of the mentioned ones. The most comprehensive studies which examine influence of English on Serbian are the *Dictionary of Anglicisms*, in Serbian, (VASIĆ, PRČIĆ & NEJGEBAUER 2001), and the study of Prčić (2005) titled *Engleski u srpskom* [English in Serbian]. The latter offers a methodological and theoretical framework for a number of recent studies, summarizing the typology of translational types³ in the process of adopting English words: direct translation, structural translation (calquing) and functional approximation. Calquing is applicable to polymorphemic words (PRČIĆ 2005: 179), which can also be *phrasal words* (as USER NAME >*korisničko ime*, FIRST LADY >*prva dama* etc. (Ibid.)). Calques are often recognized as *hidden anglicisms* as they are translated, but are created applying the English models. The paper deals with a broader definition of anglicisms, explained by Prčić in the following way: „Further, a word, a phrase or a sentence in Serbian can reflect the norm and /or apply the processes of English. In such cases, the meanings and/or the usage typical of English hide in the forms of Serbian, having the tendency of being assimilated relatively fast.“⁴

Theoretical framework

According to Crystal, calquing is a type of borrowing in which morphemic constituents of a word or a syntagm are each translated by their translation equivalents (CRYSTAL 1999, s.v. *kalk*). Calquing is seen as a subtype of *loan formation*, together with *loan rendition* and *loan creation*, “i.e. free translation (e.g. German *Klimaanlage* <*air conditioning*)” (FISHER 2008: 6). *Loan translation* or *calquing*, is defined as “the (complete) translation of a borrowing (e.g. German *Bildverarbeitung* <*English picture processing*)” (Ibid., 6). VIDAČIĆ (2000: 132) usefully sums up the theoretical literature on calquing, creating the following definition: “Calquing is a process of mapping

³ Prčić notes that the detailed typology is described by Newmark (1981, 1988), Pinchuck (1977), Wilss (1982), and specifically for Serbian, by Stojičić (2003) and Krimer-Gaborović (2004) (see Prčić 2005: 178-179).

⁴ In original: „Nadalje, neka reč, sintagma ili rečenica srpskog jezika može da odražava normu i/ili sledi običaje engleskog jezika. U ovakvim slučajevima, značenja i/ili upotrebe svojstvene oblicima engleskog jezika kriju se u oblicima srpskog jezika, koji se relativno brzo odomaćuju“ (Prčić 2005: 121).

the structure of a foreign phrase made by linking at least two morphemes or larger linguistic units onto the native translation equivalents of the phrase, thus making appropriate native lexical links in accordance with language possibilities.“⁵

Despite the fact that Anglicisms – and calques – are broadly and frequently studied, research papers on syntactic calquing are not numerous. There could be at least two reasons for this. Firstly, the syntactic level is much more complicated to define, while ‘syntactic borrowing’ almost always interferes with semantic and lexical borrowing. As Silva-Corvalán (1998) argues, syntactic changes result mostly from a lexical borrowing: “One must admit that further doors to change are open by what I call ‘lexico-syntactic calques’. In these cases, an English word is matched up with a Spanish word which incorporates semantic elements and sub-categorization and selection restrictions from English” (SILVA-CORVALÁN 1998: 231); “What is borrowed is not a syntactic structure, but the semantic or the pragmatic of a construction” (Ibid., 242). And secondly, which is very much related to the first mentioned possible reason, lexical and morphological borrowings are much more frequent than syntactic.

The summary of theoretical approaches to syntactic and phraseological calquing is given by Djorić-Francuski (2009). We will only note a diversity in the approach – from the beliefs / attitudes (KLAJN 1971, SILVA-CORVALÁN 1998) that the term *calque* is not suitable for items bigger than words (i.e. levels beyond lexical), to the opposite beliefs / attitudes that calquing should be accepted in its broader sense, which includes syntax as a field of loan translation (THOMAS 2003).

The best possible solution might be somewhere between the two stated groups of beliefs: examining lexical and semantic features of morphemes and words which are elements of calquing together with their syntactic relations. For example, Clancy researches the usage of verbs denoting *have* and *be* in Slavic languages, taking into account both meaning and structure: “Based on correspondences between Slavic and neighbouring European HAVE-languages, there appear to be quite a few syntactic calques involving verb *have*. Correspondences between German and Czech are particularly common” (CLANCY, 2010: 237). Corvalán (1998) also shows similar interconnections: “There are multiple-word calques that alter semantic and/or grammatical features of the replica language” (Ibid., 257), subdividing multiple-word calques into six types. One of them is especially interesting for our topic: “Finally, I have considered an instance of the calquing of the sequence *that is*

⁵ Original quote: “Kalkiranje predstavlja proces preslikavanja strukture stranog izraza nastalog spajanjem bar dva morfema ili veće lingvističke jedinice, na njegove domaće prevodne ekvivalente, čime se u skladu sa mogućnostima jezika, stvaraju odgovarajući domaći leksički spojevi” (Vidačić, 2000: 132).

why. Even though it may be argued that this is a bound collocation in English, I decided to include its calquing into Spanish as type 6, because it creates a syntactic structure that does not exist in this language” (Ibid., 265).

Namely, calquing *syntactic patterns* is done in Serbian equivalents of constructions ‘the + Adj/Adv^{superlative} + EVER’, but – applying the described theoretical framework – we will try to analyse such constructions from at least two aspects: semantic and syntactic. Moreover, our next attempt will be to explain pragmatic reasons for their usage.

Material and Methods

Among recent papers and studies on the Serbian language, one deals specifically with calquing of ‘the + Adj/Adv^{superlative} + EVER’ (which is ‘Ø + Adj/Adv^{superlative} + IKAD’ STANOJEVIĆ, 2010), but the grammar books of Serbian do not note the constructions of this kind. Besides this, the research that was conducted on the variety of functionalistic corpus of the contemporary Serbian language (literal, publicist, administrative, scientific and in some amount of spoken functional style) with the resources from the end of World War II till 2009, showed that the adverb EVER was not used in these constructions (ČUTURA 2010). The same result was obtained in the analysis of literal corpus of works by I. Andrić, B. Ćopić, and D. Ćosić (ČUTURA 2006). This means, as Stanojević (2010) states, that this calque is a recent, new and unexplored; this also implies that this innovation will be found in specific registers of the Serbian language which are open to innovations (media language, the Internet, oral informal communication) and among young people. These are the reasons for choosing both material and the research methodology.⁶

Material – as already mentioned – includes oral and written communication, mostly delivered through the media (TV, the Internet, journals etc.). In order to allow comparison of English and Serbian, and “serious” and entertainment media genres, the corpus includes Nottingham Corpus and BNCweb CQP edition, hosted by Lancaster University. The methodology comprises different approaches, focusing on contrasting English and Serbian

⁶ The corpus comprises cartoons, news etc. at different TV channels (History Channel, TV B92 (Serbian channel), National Serbian TV (RTS), Eurovision song contest show, TV movie Bratz. Printed media are: Evropa, NIN (both published in Belgrade) and Wienerin (an Austrian journal). The part of the corpus which is used to illustrate standard usage of adverb *ikad* in Serbian (novel *Travnička hronika* by Ivo Andrić (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1976; abbreviation TH); novel *Glava u klanu noge na vrancu* by Branko Ćopić (Sarajevo: Svjetlost – Veselin Masleša, 1985; abbreviation GKNV; fairytales *Belutak* by Grozdana Olujić (Novi Sad: Školska knjiga, 2007; abbreviation BEL)).

corpora and contrasting English and Serbian contexts / rules / constraints for using equivalent constructions.

Results

Firstly, an overview of semantic properties and usage of the adverb *ever/ikad* in English and in standard Serbian will be made in order to identify the reasons for calquing and spreading the calqued structure.

Adverb *ever* in English

The adverb *ever* is a modifier which modifies or adds to the meaning of verb phrases, adjectives or other adverbs (CARTER & MCCARTHY2006: 453). According to meaning it can be classified as an adverb of time with the following meanings: ‘at any time in the future’, ‘at any time in the past’, ‘all the time’. It always adds some degree of emphasis and is used in the following ways: in negative sentences, questions, conditional structures, and with words expressing uncertainty such as ‘doubt’: e.g. *I don't think I'll ever be homesick here ... Nothing like it had ever been built before ... Have you ever been to Paris?... I shall kill you if you ever mention my visits here ... He was unlikely ever to have seen her* (COLLINS COBUILD ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY, 1993: 483). It is also used in interrogative clauses and negative declarative clauses to mean ‘at any point in a given period of time’: e.g. *Did you ever play football in the streets?* (talking about childhood) ... *I haven't ever had anything like that happen to me* (CARTER & MCCARTHY2006: 81). Then, *ever* is used in expressions like ‘ever-increasing’ and ‘ever-present’ to show that something exists all the time or continues doing something or being something all the time: e.g. ... *an ever-increasing prison population ... an ever-present sense of danger ... his ever open notebook ... Achievement has come to be ever more important to the scientist.* Its meaning ‘all the time’ is extended to refer to the quality a person shows all the time: e.g. *Ever unpredictable, Tallulah could be angry one moment and calm the next... Ever hopeful, McKellen never gave up on the cinema... Ever the optimist, I thought everything would be okay* (COLLINS COBUILD ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY 1993: 483).

The use of *ever* with superlatives relates to the calque noticed in Serbian. *Ever* is used with superlatives, often for exaggeration, and in comparisons, especially when a present situation is compared with the past or the future. e.g. ... *one of the best novels ever written ... I am happier than I have ever*

been ... He's better than you'll ever be more women working than ever before (COLLINS COBUILD ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY 1993: 483). *Ever* is also used in affirmative relative clauses in superlative contexts, often with expressions such as *the first time, the only time*: e.g. *Yet he still admired her more than any woman he had ever met... It is the funniest film I have ever seen in my whole life.... It was the first time I've ever seen him get nasty*⁷(CARTER & MCCARTHY 2006: 81).

The role of *ever* in modification of superlatives is to achieve intensification. While a nonperiphrastic superlative may be premodified by the intensifier *very* (*She arrived at the very last moment.*), the periphrastic superlative is not premodified by the intensifier *very* (incorrect: **the very most successful candidate*), but can be postmodified with *ever*: *the most remarkable election ever* (QUIRK et al. 2005: 474). In informal (spoken) English *ever* is used with superlatives for emphasis of strong approval or disapproval: e.g. *They're the sweetest kids ever... It was the most awful film ever* (COLLINS COBUILD ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARY, 1993: 483). In these examples *ever* is not followed by a complement.

The two corpora, Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) and Lancaster University Corpus (BNCweb and the CQP query processor), include examples of superlatives modified with *ever*, both in written and spoken language. These examples show that both non-periphrastic and periphrastic superlatives can be intensified with *ever*. The corpora give examples both of 'superlative + *ever*' with a complement (a following noun/verb) and without it. However, our survey will focus on the structure 'superlative + *ever*' without a complement, as an equivalent to recently appearing structure in Serbian.

	Written	Spoken
Non-periphrastic Superlative	the best <i>ever</i> (10 examples) the highest interest rates <i>ever</i> the highest <i>ever</i> (8 examples) the worst <i>ever</i> (5 examples) the lowest <i>ever</i> (5 examples) the youngest <i>ever</i> (2 examples) the fastest <i>ever</i> (2 examples) the longest <i>ever</i>	the fastest <i>ever</i> (2 examples) the best <i>ever</i> the highest <i>ever</i>

⁷ A relative clause following the form 'superlative + noun' is useful especially with a perfect tense: *It/This is the best beer (that) I have ever drunk. It/this was the worst film (that) he had ever seen. He is the kindest man (that) I have ever met. It was the most worrying day (that) he had ever spent.* (Thomson and Martinet 1992: 38)

Periphrastic Superlative	the most exciting <i>ever</i> the most interesting <i>ever</i> the most successful <i>ever</i> (4 examples)	
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Table 1: The structure ‘superlative + ever’ in Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE) and Lancaster University Corpus

It can be concluded that the structure ‘superlative + ever’ without a complement is noticed to:

1. appear ten times more often in written texts than in spoken ones (40 : 4);
2. appear with seven different non-periphrastic superlatives in written texts (the best, the highest, the worst, the lowest, the youngest, the fastest, the longest)⁸;
3. appear with three non-periphrastic superlatives in spoken texts (the fastest, the best, the highest)⁹;
4. include more cases with non-periphrastic superlatives (both in written and spoken texts) than with periphrastic superlatives (38 : 6);
5. appear with three different periphrastic superlatives in written texts (the most exciting, the most interesting, the most successful)¹⁰;

⁸ As an illustration, we will give one example for each of the structures: [AAR 106](#) It's not really up to me to judge that they are **the best ever**. [CH5 2849](#) A staggering 5.1 million exam papers were taken — 65,000 more than last year — and the numbers getting top grades are **the highest ever**, especially in key subjects like modern languages and English. [J3C 564](#) Ozone levels over the South Pole were also **the lowest ever**, and 50 per cent destruction of the ozone layer was reported above populated areas of southern Argentina and Chile. [G28 240](#) A second, informal survey of major underwriters of credit insurance risk supported recent Trade Indemnity figures and indicated that third quarter 1991 bad debts were likely to be **the worst ever**. [EW9 237](#) The next Master was **the youngest ever**. [EX1 332](#) The 1955 Le Mans was to be **the fastest ever** and the two Mercedes of Stirling Moss (GB) and Juan Manuel Fangio (Arg) were expected to dominate the race. [HLM 2493](#) The US space shuttle Columbia successfully completed a 14-day flight on July 9, **the longest ever** by a space shuttle crew, during which the prolonged effects of weightlessness on the human body were further studied.

⁹ As an illustration, we will give one example for each of the structures: [KE1 2562](#) He's **the best ever** [unclear] [HUD 527](#) But today, with highest unemployment levels for many years, it's not **the highest ever** in some of our own regions, it's a lot of nonsense. [KDE 2038](#) He was used to his friends knowing the answers to his problems but this was **the fastest ever**.

¹⁰ As an illustration, we will give one example for each of the structures: [BM4 1461](#) Telethon co-ordinator Margo Horsley said this week: ‘This is the last time TVS will be able to take part in Telethon, and there is tremendous enthusiasm at the station to make it **the most exciting ever**. [CSK 386](#) ‘This show is going to be the noisiest or **the most interesting ever** because the technologies are in transition,’ Cray said. [CJR 236](#) So this Spring Raffle came a very, very, close

6. not appear with periphrastic superlatives in spoken texts; appear as a full statement only once (K8R 1280 *The best ever*).

In 44 examples presented in the survey, the structure ‘superlative + ever’¹¹ without a complement appears as a full statement only once: *The best ever*. Its function is not clear, as there is no context. It may be an expression of strong approval or praise, similar to the language of advertising. The same structure has recently appeared in Serbian in advertisements. An example *Najduža ikada* [*the longest ever*] refers to a battery and its long ‘life’ or durability. Klajn (2012) explains this unusual use of the structure ‘superlative + *ikada*’ [superlative + *ever*] without a verb to follow it, as a result of the very strong influence of English in the area of advertising and printed media (newspaper headings) where short and catchy phrases are increasingly being used, opposing the grammar rules and logic of the Serbian language.

Adverb IKADA in Serbian

Comparing the semantics of Serbo-Croatian, Russian and Polish pronominal adverbs, Piper (1988) defines that the *i-adverbs* (*ikad* – temporal, *igde*, *ikamo* – spatial etc.) are non-referential quantifiers, although they can be also used as universal negative quantifiers (PIPER 1988: 105). Semantically, these adverbs are marked by the feature of unreality, i.e. adverb *ikad* can express doubt towards reality of an object of quantification (Ibid., 110). Adverb *ever* can be used in comparative constructions to modify the meaning of an adverbial or adjective, e.g.:

U tim mojim “likvidatorskim danima” pojmio sam, dublje no ikad, prirodu sukoba istine i vere... (GREŠNIK, 305) [In those “liquidator days” of mine_{Loc} [I] realised, more deeply than ever, [the] nature [of the] conflict_{Gen} [between] truth_{Gen} and faith_{Gen}]
Reka je dublja nego ikad. [[The] river is deeper than ever]

Stanojević (2010) lists the contexts in which *ikad* can be used in Serbian. In statements, it cannot be used in the domain of local (intraclausal) negation, but can be used with non-local negation (negation in an superordinated clause) (for more detailed information, see KOVAČEVIĆ 2004: 82):¹²

second to **the most successful ever** ...

¹¹ According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the structure is 'originally U.S.': the Dictionary gives an example from O Henry from 1908, and British examples from 1924.

¹² Kovačević (2004) takes into account the features of double negation in the Serbian language (e.g. On nikad nije uradio to = He NEVER has NOT done that). Use of *ever* in negative clauses and sentences is not of primary importance in this study.

*Marko to nije ikada rekao. [Marko hasn't ever said that]

Ne kažem da je Marko to ikada rekao. [I do not say that Marko has ever said that]

(examples in Serbian: STANOJEVIĆ 2010: 131)

In short, the other contexts are the following:

a) yes-no questions

Hoćeš li se *ikad više* bacati busenjem na svoje drugove, a?
Will you *ever more* throw bushes_{instr} towards your friends, ha? (GKNV 240)

b) if-clauses hypotethic sentences

I ako bi se ikad,po volji sudbine, desilo da mi izgubimo ove krajeve i da
And if ever, if destiny wishes, it would happen that we lose these lands and that

ih osvoji neka hrišćanska zemlja (...) sa njima bi bilo isto.(TH 416)

a christian state conquers them, (...)nothing would change with them.

c) relative clauses with universal quantifier

On ume da odsvira sve pesme koje su Dire Straits ikad odsvirali.

He can play all songs which Dire Straits has ever played.

d) comparative

Tako jednog dana, odlete u nebo više nego ikada (BEL 42)

So one day, [he] flew into the sky further than ever

Bio je teži i mračniji nego ikad, govorio je dubokim, muklim glasom ... (TH 372)

He was more difficult and darker than ever, andhe spoke with deep, hoarse voice_{instr}

Počelo je novo doba, koje su astrolozi nazvali Dobom vodolije, u kojem će doći do The new age started, which astrologists named the Age ofAquarius,which will bring

većih sloboda nego ikada ranije. (Evropa 175, 16.8.2007, 56)
greater freedom than ever before.

e) superlative

Ovo je najbolji film koji sam ikada video.

This is the best movie which I have ever seen.

The most important contexts for our research are, however, determined by the comparative of adverbials and adjectives, in which *ever* comes in contact with the superlative and comparative. Stanojević notes that comparative constructions with *ever* have in fact a superlative meaning (better than ever = the best (until the moment of speaking)).¹³ Therefore, it can be said that the

¹³ Kovačević (2003: 31-32) notes that superlative can be expressed by using periphrastic form 'comparative + *than* + general pronoun', e.g. „bolje nego IKO“ [= better than anyone], više

analysis takes into account the use of *ever* with a superlative, both syntetic and periphrastic.

One specific constructive type of adjective constructions with *ever* can be treated as transformed subtype of type (e). It does not include a subordinated relative clause, which is comprimed into one lexical component (past participle). This can be shown by transforming sentences, e.g.:

U San Francisku, na kapiji Muzeja čarolija, izložen je
 In San Francisco, at the gate of the Museum of Magic, they have exposed
 najveći hologram *ikada vidjen*, gde se pojavljuje djavo s prelepom vešticom.
 the biggest hollogram *ever seen*, where the devil appears with a beautiful witch.
 → ... izložen je najveći hologram *koji je ikada vidjen*, gde se pojavljuje...

Luster u takozvanoj sali Jugoslavije je verovatno najveći *koji je ikada napravljen*.
 The chandelier in the so-called Yugoslavia Hall is probably the biggest one
which has ever been made.

→ Luster u takozvanoj sali Jugoslavije je verovatno najveći *ikada napravljen*.
 (NIN 2957, 30.8.2007, 32)

Further transformation can be made by ellipting the past participle, having as the result calqued English construction, e.g. *najveći hologram ikad* [the biggest hollogram ever], *najveći (luster) ikad* [the biggest (chandelier) ever]. In terms of syntactic transformations, we deal with double ellipting (relative clause → past participle → Ø; STANOJEVIĆ 2010: 130), but in terms of syntactic interference, we could assume that the first transformation (relative clause → past participle) „opened the door“ to the influence of English and to creating a calque which is not recognized as normative in Serbian.

This conclusion can be supported by comparing constructions which include superlatives of adverbs in constructions with superlatives of adjectives. In Serbian, adverb *ikadis* normally used with other comparative adverbs, e.g. *Spavao je bolje nego ikad* [= He slept better than ever], but not with superlative adverb **Spavao je najbolje ikad* [= He slept the best ever]. The premodification done by an averb is secondary, because it can only be followed by an adjective (past participle in English): *najbolje organizovana trka* [the best organized race], while relative clause with *ever*, which follows, contains the verb:

najbolje organizovana trka koju sam ikad video [the best organized race I have ever seen].

nego IŠTA [= more than anything]. It is easy to note that the non-referential adverbs *ikad*, *igde* etc. belong to the same semantic subsystem with pronouns *iko*, *išta* and that they are used in the same contexts.

The result of 'double ellypsis' would be *the best organized race ever*, and one more step of ellypting is needed to get 'superlative + noun + ever'. But, on the other hand, it can be noted that here the superlative would not be an adverb any more, and that the result would be the same as by transforming *the best race I have ever seen*:

(1) Relative clause

Adjective superlative: Ovo je najbolja trka koju sam ikada video.
This is the best race which I have ever seen.

Adverb superlative: Ovo je najbolje organizovana trka koju sam ikada video.
This is best organized race which I have ever seen.

(2) Final normative result

Adjective superlative: Ovo je najbolja trka ikada vidjena.
This is the best race ever seen.

Adverb superlative: Ovo je najbolja trka ikada organizovana.
This is the best race ever organized.

(3) Past participle → ∅ (calquing)

Adjective / adverb superlative: Ovo je najbolja trka ikada.
This is the best race ever.

The information on the quality of race organization is lost; the adverb in (1) is in syntactic command of an adjective and it is transformed into homoformous adjective in (2), because it functionally belongs to the noun. Therefore, calquing of the constructions which include a superlative adverb is not supported by previous steps of ellypting in Serbian. It can be concluded that the main difference between the common usage in the analysed structure is that only adjectival constructions are calqued, while adverbial ones are very rare (and not recognized as normative) in Serbian, e.g.:

Finalni turnir Svetske lige (...) označen je kao najbolje organizovan ikada. (NIN 2933, 15.3.2007, 31).

The final tournament of the World League (...) has been named as the best organized ever.

Calqued structure 'superlative + (noun) + *ikad*' in usage

The calqued structure 'superlative + (noun) + *ikad*' has not been found in the 20th century novels analysed for the purpose of this study. However, its usage has been noted down in media language: television (commercials, serials, documentaries, cartoons, films, entertainment programmes and news

of the national TV channels), newspapers and magazines (advertisements, headlines). It seems that the structure has appeared in Serbian as an outcome of literal translations of the media language from English into Serbian. It is especially evident in commercials and advertisements, many of which are for imported products accompanied with slogans in English. „In most of the languages, the texts in advertisements contain a higher percentage of loanwords than texts in editorial sections of newspapers: in Icelandic advertisements contain 6-7 times as many loanwords as the editorial text“ (GRAEDLER 2004: 9). Another important factor that may have contributed to the spread of the calque is the age group which many of the advertisements address: young people. „Texts aimed at young people and texts about entertainment have an overall relatively high frequency of loanwords“ (GRAEDLER 2004: 9).

Some examples of the calque on television include: iPod touch. *Najzabavniji iPod ikad.* [iPod touch. The most entertaining iPod ever]¹⁴; „Ooooo, Patriče, tisinajboljelošedruštvoikada!“ [Oh, Patrick, you are the best bad company ever.]¹⁵; „*The most famous Nazi hunter ever; One of the biggest nazists ever.*“¹⁶; „Potruđiću se da ovo bude *najbolja turneja ikad*“ [I’ll try to make it the best tour ever.]¹⁷

The calque has even entered serious television programmes, like the national news programmes, or the programmes related to the Eurovision Contest. Here are some examples: 1. „Razorni zemljotres, *najjači ikada*, pogodio je Japan.“ [“A devastating earthquake, the most powerful ever, has struck Japan.“]¹⁸; 2. „Sever ostrva Honšu, *najvećeg u Japanu*, pogodio je *najjači zemljotres ikada.*“ [The north of Honshu Island, the largest one in Japan, has been struck by the most powerful earthquake ever.“]¹⁹; 3. „Ovo joj je *najveći uspeh ikada* u životu“ [„This is the greatest life success ever.“]²⁰; 4. „To je njihov *prvi javni nastup ikada.*“ [„This is their first public participation ever.“]²¹

¹⁴ „Apple“ iPod television advertisement

¹⁵ Translation of „SpongeBob SquarePants“ cartoon episode, broadcast on TVB92 on 25 December 2009.

¹⁶ The programme Hitler’s 3rd Reich, broadcast on History Channel on 12 May 2010.

¹⁷ History Channel programme about Elvis Presley, broadcast on 21 May 2010.

¹⁸ The Serbian national television channel RTS1 News 2 on 11 March 2011.

¹⁹ The Serbian national television channel RTS1 News 2 on 11 March 2011, the report by the official reporter from Japan.

²⁰ The programme “Eurovision Contest”, the Serbian presenter, broadcast on the Serbian national television channel RTS1 on 26 May 2010.

²¹ The programme “Song for Eurovision Contest”, the Serbian competitor, broadcast on the Serbian national television channel RTS1 on 26 February 2011.

Our corpus also includes the examples of the structure ‘superlative + (noun) + *ever*’ appearing in the movie *Bratz*²² aimed for teenagers. The subtitles in Serbian fully reflect the English structure. Here are the original, English, examples: 1. I’m gonna have **the hottest clothes ever**. 2. Cloy, you are **the biggest clumsy ever**. 3. **The best friends ever**. 4. That was **the most amazing party ever!** 5. You have **the most incredible hair ever**. 6. **The best party ever**. 7. **The sweetest 16th party ever**. 8. You are truly **the best friends ever**. All examples show the use of the structure for exaggeration or intensification, and *ever* postmodifies both non-periphrastic superlatives (the hottest, the biggest, the best, the sweetest) and non-periphrastic superlatives (*the most amazing*, *the most incredible*).

Attitudes to the structure ‘superlative + (noun) + *ikad*’ in Serbian

This mini-study aimed to explore how many different usages of the adverb *ikad* students in a university teaching context recognize in their mother tongue (Serbian).

The chosen instrument for this research was a questionnaire. The reason for this was that questionnaires are economical in terms of time (they are usually easy to complete) and money as well; moreover, a researcher can reach a large number of respondents who receive the same questions, usually quick to complete. Also, questionnaires tend to be quantitative and to generate conclusive findings more easily (WALLACE 1998).

A sample of 146 students completed the questionnaire. There were male and female students of the first, second and third academic year at the Faculty of Education in Jagodina, Serbia. The Serbian language is the mother tongue to all the respondents, who learn it as an obligatory academic subject. The English language is also an obligatory academic subject to these students and they learn it as a foreign language.

Data concerning the question *Is it grammatically right to say: “The softest perfume ever.”*²³ is presented in Table 2 below:

²² The movie was produced in 2007 by Lions Gate Films, Inc., DVD video, and distributed in Serbia by MILLENNIUM film and video, Belgrade, with subtitles in Serbian.

²³ The question referred to the equivalent in Serbian and was aimed to determine students’ attitudes to the newly appearing calque in Serbian. The question was: “Da li je ispravna rečenica: ‘Najnežniji dezodorans ikad.’ Zašto?”

<i>Is it grammatically right to say: "The softest perfume ever." Why (not)?</i>	Frequency	%
YES	11	7,85
NO	129	92,14
Overall	140	95,89
Missing	6	4,10
Σ	146	100

Table 2: Attitudes to the structure ‘superlative + (noun) + *ever*’ in Serbian

The purpose of this question was to find out what is the students’ knowledge about the grammatical usage of the adverb ‘*ever*’. As we can see in the Table 1, 92,14% of students believe that the given sentence is wrong providing the following reasons: “perfume cannot be soft”, “*ever* is wrong”, “it should be said *until now*”, “*ever* does not exist as a word”, “it doesn’t sound right”, etc.

Accordingly, we may conclude that a very frequent usage of anglicisms in the Serbian language creates problems for students in the process of understanding the lexis of their own mother tongue. For that reason, students are often confused and are not able to explain the grammatical usage of a certain word or an expression.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the calqued structure ‘superlative + (noun) + *ikad*’ exists in Serbian and is found both in written (media) and spoken language (young people). The examples of advertisements, commercials, television news, subtitles (serials, cartoons, films, DVD’s), and reports indicate its ever-increasing usage in Serbian. These examples show that the main reason for its usage is literal translation from English into Serbian. This may have resulted in its spread to spoken language among young people as an outcome of their exposure to the media, and to serve as a structure expressing exaggeration and intensification.

Our research indicates that the structure ‘superlative + (noun) + *ikad*’ has not originally been created in Serbian and is not recognised as normative in it. The evidence for that is both the analysis of the semantic features and usage of its equivalent *ikad* to postmodify ‘superlative + noun’ structure, especially the analysis of the elliptic processes performed in Serbian. The study of the students’ attitudes to the structure indicate that it is not recognised

as normative and that it can even negatively influence students' understanding of the lexis of Serbian, the students' native language.

The usage of the structure 'superlative + (noun) + *ikad*' in the Serbian media is noted by Klajn (2012) as a quite recent one: „'Ikad' used without a verb has appeared in Serbian only in the last few years under the influence of English, above all in headlines and advertisements.“²⁴ Klajn (ibid.) goes on to conclude that the structure, though not normative in Serbian, satisfies other criteria – it is rather short and catchy – and as such very suitable for advertising slogans, which normative Serbian can hardly satisfy. The years to come will show how the calque 'survives' in Serbian: whether it stays in the domain of the media and the spoken language of young people, or spreads further and enters literary language as well.

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²⁴ Klajn (2012) (original Serbian quote): „'Ikad' bez glagola javilo se kod nas tek poslednjih godina pod uticajem engleskog, pre svega u naslovima i reklamama.“

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ON ONE COLLOQUIAL ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION IN THE SERBIAN LANGUAGE

У раду се истражује употреба једног граматичког калка у српском језику (енгл. 'the + Adj/Advsuperlative + EVER'). Аутори упоређују значење и употребу прилога *икад* у енглеском језику са значењем и употребом његовог еквивалента у српском језику (*икад*) узимајући у обзир разлике између стандардног и колоквијалног језика. Посебна пажња је посвећена утицају енглеског језика путем медија (укључујући интернет и рекламе), с обзиром на то да анализирани калк углавном користи омладина.

Кључне речи: калк, позајмљивање, колоквијални говор, временски прилози, ever, икад.