

## **WHAT THE INFORMATION STRUCTURE OF THE SERBIAN SHORT AND LONG FORM ADJECTIVES TELLS US ABOUT THE STRUCTURE OF THE DP**

The paper tests the predictions of the two competing views of the nominal structure: the DP-Parameter Hypothesis and the Universal DP Hypothesis in the domain of the prosodic behavior of the long and short form adjectives in Serbian. The prediction of the former is that both types of adjectives will prosodically behave the same, and similar to the noun. The prediction of the latter is that long form adjectives will pattern with determiner words and short form adjectives with nouns. The testing, using relative clause paraphrases of adjectives, supported the Universal DP Hypothesis, as it fully confirmed its predictions.

*Keywords:* DP Parameter Hypothesis, Universal DP Hypothesis, Serbian, Short and long form adjectives, information structure, prosody

### 1. Introduction

There has been a lively debate in the field of syntax regarding the question of the presence of the DP projection in the nominal structure of languages without articles, such as Serbian. One pole in the debate builds on the Universal DP Hypothesis (UDPH), stemming from Longobardi (1994), and holding that the DP projection is necessary both for establishing reference and for the capacity of a nominal expression to appear as an argument. UDPH thus universally postulates a DP projection for all referential nominal expressions, and for all nominal expressions appearing in syntactic argument positions, irrespective of whether a language has articles or not. The opposite pole is represented by the DP Parameter Hypothesis (DPPH), originating from Fukui (1988) and Corver (1992), elaborated in Bošković (2005, 2008), according to which the presence of the DP projection is parametrized: languages with articles have it, and languages without articles do not.

The proponents of the DPPH treat all the prenominal constituents in the nominal expression: adjectives, determiners and quantifiers, as adjectives within the NP domain, while the proponents of the UDPH divide them minimally into two classes: those occurring

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at the level of the NP and those occurring at the level of the DP. This division opens room for empirical testing of the two hypotheses on different levels of grammar, from phonology, via morphology, to syntax (and semantics). In this paper, I submit them to a testing in the domain of phonology, or more precisely – of prosody.

The testing derives from an asymmetry in the predictions of the two views. DPPH predicts that all adjectives and the determiner elements will show a similar prosodic pattern, most likely with the noun also patterning with them. UDPH predicts that two classes of adnominal elements will be observed, showing two different patterns of behavior. One class will have semantic and syntactic similarities with the noun, and the other will include determiner like elements and adjectives that are semantically and syntactically linked with them.

Serbian indeed provides a very good environment for the testing of this prediction, as its adjectives occur in two different forms: the long and the short form. The long form, also known as the definite adjectives, patterns more closely with determiners, in carrying definiteness/specificity semantics and combining only with expressions whose semantics matches that of the DP. The short form, also known as the indefinite adjectives, patterns more closely with the noun, as it receives only an intersective interpretation (expected if combining with a same type, i.e. if the noun it modifies is of the same logical type as the adjective). The straightforward testing would then target the prosodic behavior of the two types of adjectives in a nominal expression which involves both a noun and determiner-like elements.

Unfortunately, this direct testing encounters two obstacles. One is that within the same nominal expression, phonological constraints such as the nuclear stress can affect the behavior of these items. The other is that short form adjectives only occur with determiner-like elements in exceptional, highly marked, and analytically controversial cases (most traditional grammars claim they do not at all, see Stevanović 1986; Stanković 2015 gives a detailed overview). The latter problem can be resolved by sticking to the noun, i.e. testing the prediction that either all adjectives will pattern alike, and similar to the noun, or short forms will pattern with the noun while long forms will not. Additionally, since long forms do combine with determiner-like elements, they could further be checked for prosodic patterning.

The problem with the nuclear stress and other possible noise can be resolved in the following way. The nominal expression involving an adjective and a noun can be paraphrased along the lines in (1), to a noun followed by a predicative relative clause.

- (1) svetao zid → zid koji je svetao  
light wall wall which is light  
'a light wall' 'a wall which is light (in color)'

This method has additional advantages: the adjective and the noun are scattered across different structures, of different categories (nominal and clausal), they are separated by other elements in the linear order, and finally, as explained in section 3, both classes of adjectives are paraphrased by the short form, so even the potential effect of morphology is eliminated.

This paper discusses the testing of the two hypotheses along the lines described in this section and it is organized as follows. In section 2, I present the major issues playing a

role in the debate between the DPPH and the UDPH. Section 3 gives a somewhat broader overview of the long vs. short form adjectives in Serbian, with a focus on those most relevant for the aim of the paper. Section 4 reports on the testing itself, and section 5 summarises the findings.

## 2. Is there a DP when there are no articles?

Arguments have been put forth for the claim that Serbian has no determiner category whatsoever, and that the words with determiner semantics in this language are syntactically plain adjectives (the DPPH). These arguments include 1) the fact that bare nouns can be definite in Serbian (ZLATIĆ 1998), 2) the fact that possessive pronouns can occur as predicates (ZLATIĆ 1998), 3) the fact that different candidates for determiners may stack in Serbian (ZLATIĆ 1998), 4) the fact that all prenominal elements in Serbian, including potential determiners, show the same type of agreement with the noun (BOŠKOVIĆ 2005), and 5) the fact that the items with determiner semantics undergo Left Branch Extraction just like regular adjectives (CORVER 1992, BOŠKOVIĆ 2005).

Zlatić (1998) observes that even though definiteness in Serbian can be overtly marked by the use of demonstratives, a bare singular noun can as well have a definite interpretation – unlike in languages with articles (cf. (2a vs. b))

- (2) a. Taj student voli Mariju.                      b. Student voli Mariju.  
       Dem<sup>2</sup> student loves Marija                      Student loves Marija  
       ‘That/the student loves Marija.’                      ‘The/a student loves Marija.’

This is a weak argument against the DP. Tools such as empty categories or ellipsis, independently introduced in the linguistic modeling, predict this type of behavior. Moreover, bare nouns accept definite interpretations in languages with articles as well (e.g. CARLSON 1977, ZAMPARELLI 1995, and especially SCHMITT and MUNN 1999, MUNN and SCHMITT 2005, ESPINAL and MCNALLY 2011) and there are contexts in Serbian where a determiner is obligatory (the absence of a determiner in Serbian has to be semantically and pragmatically licensed, see Caruso 2012, as well as Stanojević 2012 on implied definites in Serbian). This is illustrated, respectively, by the obligatory use of a particular demonstrative in the context in (3a, b) and the ban on the use of particular determiners in the generic and implied definite cases in (3c-d).<sup>1</sup> Hence, there is no principled difference between the two types of languages – the difference is in the degree: in the number of contexts allowing a definite interpretation of bare nouns, of contexts where determiners are necessary.

- (3) a. A: Uhvatio sam čudnog insekta<sub>i</sub> u sobi.  
       ‘I caught a strange insect in my bedroom.’  
       B: Ima li #(taj/#ovaj/#onaj) insekt<sub>i</sub> žaoku?  
       Has Q Dem<sup>2/1/3</sup> insect sting  
       ‘Does that/the insect have a sting?’

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<sup>1</sup> Some quantifiers, such as the universal quantifier *svi* ‘all’, escape the ban on the determiners in implied definites. Interestingly, however, these are exactly the quantifiers that can combine with the definite article in languages with articles, which further supports the view involving a zero definite article.

- b. Svidela mi se [\*(ona)] knjiga juče].  
 appealed me.Dat Refl Dem book yesterday  
 ‘I liked [that book yesterday]’
- c. (#taj/#ovaj/#onaj) čovek je nastao od (#tog/#ovog/#onog) majmuna  
 Dem<sup>2/1/3</sup> man Aux emerged from Dem<sup>2/1/3</sup> monkey  
 ‘The man evolved from the monkey.’
- d. Vojska je umarširala u grad. (#Ta/#njegova) svetla su bila ugašena.  
 The army marched into the city. those/its lights Aux been turned\_off  
 ‘The army marched into the city. #Those/#its/[(all) the] lights were out.’

Examples like these contribute to the body of evidence for a different view, according to which a) Serbian has a DP, b) Serbian has a zero determiner which is the direct counterpart of the English definite article and c) precise conditions can be specified for languages without articles which license the use of the zero determiners, as well as those that necessitate the overt ones.

The argument from possessives occurring in predicate positions or combining with demonstratives is flawed. In a large number of languages, including article languages such as Italian (see especially the well-formed Italian examples in (4)), possessives do not show strong characteristics of determiners.<sup>2</sup>

- (4) a. Ova knjiga je moja.                      b. ta moja knjiga                      *Serbian*  
 Dem<sup>1</sup> book is my/mine                      Dem<sup>2</sup> my book
- questo libro e mio                              il mio libro                      *Italian*  
 this book is my/mine                      the my book  
 ‘This book is mine.’                              ‘my book’

The shared inflection morphology between the determiner-like words and adjectives in Serbian is taken to imply their being of the same category. Again, there is no reason why two distinct categories should not take the same set of agreement endings. Moreover, the adjectival declension referred to is a consequence of a generalized anaphoric pronoun incorporation into adjectives in an earlier stage of development (e.g. SCHENKER 1993), and before that adjectives used to decline exactly like nouns (without being one and the same category).

The argument from the generalization that the ordering between words with determiner semantics and adjectives is free is based on a false generalization. This ordering is subject to hard constraints, as illustrated in the discussion of examples (8)-(9) below (see also PERELTSVAIG 2007).

Bošković (2008) and Runić (2011) put forth an argument based on Fukui’s (1988) generalization in respect of the possibility to (restrictively) modify pronouns. His generalization was that in English pronouns cannot be modified, with a small number of

<sup>2</sup> Storto (2000) argues that even the English Saxon Genitive is ambiguous between a definite and an indefinite reading. His crucial set of data comes from non-identificational use of possessives in copular predicates (*These books are my books, and those books are my books as well*). The fact that they do not preserve the indefinite interpretation (and the availability of the corresponding syntactic position) in argument nominals is an issue that receives independent explanation.

exceptions, while in Japanese all pronouns are productively modified. The explanation provided was that the Japanese lexicon, unlike its English counterpart, lacks the functional element D, and that hence all Japanese pronouns share their category with common nouns. In English however, all pronouns, with very few exceptions, are of the category D. Indeed, in Serbian pronouns can be modified, although in most cases the examples sound degraded. Examples like that in (5) can be found in literary language, yet speakers judge them as marginal.

- (5) ?Jedan jučerašnji on stoji dok staklena vrata klize...  
one yesterday.Adj he stands while glass.Adj door slides  
'A him from yesterday is standing while the glass door is sliding...'

Even if we ignore the degradation in Serbian, the generalization turns out to be false. English personal pronouns are easily modified, as shown in the examples in (6) – note especially the use of the definite article when a non-possessive adjective is used, supporting the view that the pronoun, when modified, does not go to D(P).

- (6) a. Doctor's time-shifted call to Clara at the end of the episode, asking her to take care of the new him.  
b. And he had just read something that the critic Marvin Kitman had written about the old him being better than the new him. Marvin Kitman hated the new him.  
c. My him, not yesterday's him.  
d. Last night's him was so unlike the him that Sepi had first met.  
e. In another place, I see a different you.

Melchin (2014) reports that in Polish, another Slavic language without articles, pronouns cannot be modified. The same is the case in Slovak, while a significant number of speakers of Macedonian (a Slavic language with articles) judge examples with modified pronouns only slightly degraded.<sup>3</sup> Finally, pronouns in German, a language with articles, cannot be modified.<sup>4</sup> As the availability of all four combinations shows – modifiable pronouns and articles (English, Macedonian), modifiable pronouns and no articles (Serbian, Japanese), non-modifiable pronouns and articles (German, Bulgarian) and non-modifiable pronouns and no articles (Polish, Slovak) – the modifiability of pronouns is not a function of the presence vs. absence of articles in a language (also MELCHIN's 2014 conclusion).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Veronika Richtarcikova (p.c.).

<sup>4</sup> Pronouns can be modified in German if they have been nominalized, such as the first person pronoun *ich* used to denote someone's identity, in which case it does not take cased forms, it is written with the capital initial letter like other common nouns in German, and it can combine with the second and third person possessives, all of which confirms its nominalized status

<sup>5</sup> Bošković (2009) has a more accurate empirical picture, acknowledging the grammaticality of modified pronouns in English and Macedonian, but he makes a point that in these languages the case assignment to the pronoun is blocked, since the pronoun obligatorily bears the default case in both languages (in English: *yesterday's him/\*he*). He takes this blocking and its absence in article-less languages to be testifying about the absence of DP in the latter type of languages. But other explanations are available too, for instance that the problem is in the absence of cased forms of the article and of the adjectives in Macedonian (under the requirement

The argument from Left Branch Extraction (LBE) originates from Corver's (1992) observation that languages which allow LBE tend to be languages which do not have articles. His analysis, further elaborated in Bošković (2005, 2008), models this link in terms of the absence of a DP projection in LBE languages: languages with articles have the DP projection, and the DP projection triggers island effects.

- (7) Desni sam oštetio ~~desni~~ far, levi je u redu  
 right Aux1Sg damaged right headlight left is in order  
 'It's the right headlight that I damaged, the left one is fine.'

The LBE facts are, however, far from the clear line drawn by Bošković (2005, 2008). Certain languages with articles, such as French, Bulgarian and Macedonian do allow LBE. They display different degrees of restrictedness in respect to this phenomenon: French and Bulgarian are relatively restricted, while Macedonian is much more liberal. Article-less (Slavic) languages also show different degrees of liberty regarding LBE configurations, with Russian being somewhat more restricted, and with Serbian at about the same level as Macedonian (in the interest of space, no data from other languages are provided in this paper, but see Fanselow & Fery 2014 for a detailed overview). Moreover, there are simple and appealing analyses of the Serbian LBE which rely on the DP projection (e.g. Fanselow & Čavar 2002 in terms of distributed deletion, or Predolac 2011 in terms of secondary predication). Fanselow & Fery 2014 provide prosodic data supporting the view that it is an entire DP that moves in the Serbian type of LBE.

Apart from the more general arguments for UDPH, such as those based on the parallels between the clausal and the nominal structures (ABNEY 1987, SZABOLCSI 1987 and a lot of subsequent work), there are also those from the tendency of determiner-like words to sit very high in the nominal structure. Both demonstratives and EAS/EIS markers tend to surface in the hierarchically highest position in a nominal expression, as illustrated by the strong parallelism between English (in (8)) and Serbian (in (9)) (see also PERELTSVAIG 2007, CARUSO 2012 for the same type of argument).

- (8) a. a little blue chair                      b. a blue little chair  
 c. \*little a blue chair                      d. such a blue chair  
 e. the/that little blue chair                f. the/that blue little chair  
 g. \*little the/that blue chair                h. \*such the/that blue chair  
 i. that one chair                              j. \*one that chair

- (9) a. jedna mala plava stolica      f. ta plava mala stolica  
     one little blue chair              Dem<sup>2</sup> blue little chair  
     b. jedna plava mala stolica      g. \*mala ta plava stolica<sup>6</sup>  
     one blue little chair                little Dem<sup>2</sup> blue chair

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that they agree with the projecting head, in this case the cased pronoun), or that the blocking comes from the article, but a zero article is not able to block case assignment.

<sup>6</sup> With a strongly stressed (i.e. focal) preposed adjective (here *MALA* 'little') and a parenthetic determiner-like item (*jedna*), especially in colloquial and poetic language, this order becomes acceptable. This type of

c. *mala jedna plava stolica	h. *takva ta plava stolica
little one blue chair	such Dem <sup>2</sup> blue chair
d. takva jedna plava stolica	i. ta jedna stolica
such one blue chair	Dem <sup>2</sup> one chair
e. ta mala plava stolica	j. *jedna ta stolica <sup>7</sup>
Dem <sup>2</sup> little blue chair	one Dem <sup>2</sup> chair

Similarities are not restricted to the global level, but occur in more particular constructions as well. Consider the phenomenon known as modified light nouns / indefinite pronouns, characteristic for the inversion of the neutral ordering between the head and the modifier, as in (10).

- (10) a. something nice                      b. no place special                      c. anything sharp

Several different analyses have been proposed for this pattern (KISHIMOTO 2000, LARSON and MARUŠIĆ 2004, BAYER & BRANDNER 2004, LEU 2005, MARUŠIĆ and ŽAUCER 2009), all of which crucially relying on the DP projection.<sup>8</sup> The common point to all these approaches is that a determiner component contained in the indefinite pronoun needs to reach the DP to check its determiner features and establish interpretation.

The same pattern is very productive in Serbian.

- (11) a. nešto            lepo            b. svašta            zanimljivo            c. ništa            posebno  
some\_what nice            all\_what interesting            neg\_what special  
‘something nice’            ‘all kinds of interesting stuff’            ‘nothing special’
- d. bilo    šta oštro            e. mnogo    šta    novo            f. štošta            sumnjivo  
be    what sharp            many    what    new            what\_what suspicious  
‘anything sharp’            ‘a lot of new stuff’            ‘diverse suspicious stuff’

Just like in the global picture, the fact that Serbian shows behavior equivalent to that of languages with articles in respect to a phenomenon involving determiners, the analyses of which involve a crucial role of the DP projection, strongly favors the UDPH against the DPPH theories.

The reader is referred to, among others, Progovac (1998), Leko (1999), Rutkowski (2002), Bašić (2004), Pereltsvaig (2007), Caruso (2012), Stanković (2014) for additional

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expressions, which is closely related also to Left Branch Extraction (as by a rule exactly in the same set of cases also a clausal preposing of the extracted adjective is possible) is left for further investigation. Note just that this does not make an argument that determiner-like items do not have a designated projection like they have in languages with articles, because this type of ordering is also allowed in some languages with articles, such as Spanish: *Donde espumoso el mar siciliano* lit. ‘Where foamy the sea Sicilian’, from *Fábula de Polifemo y Galatea* by Luis de Góngora y Argote. Under the right context, this word order is also possible in colloquial speech (Vicente, p.c.).

<sup>7</sup> This example is well formed on the type (of chairs) interpretation, but in this case arguably one nominal expression (denoting a type) embeds in another (denoting an individual). Again, the same is possible in a number of languages with articles.

<sup>8</sup> Kishimoto in fact relies more on the NumP, but this is equally incompatible with the approaches arguing that in article-less languages NP is the highest projection of the nominal domain. This analysis also works on DP-less accounts allowing for other functional projections in the nominal domain, such as Despić (2009).

more concrete arguments in favor of the DP projection in Slavic languages without articles. The analysis proposed in this paper for the information-structural regularities in the use of the two adjectival forms in Serbian presents a further argument in favor of the availability of the DP projection in the syntactic model of Serbian nominal expressions.

### 3. Long and Short Form Adjectives in Serbian

Like several other Balto-Slavic languages, Serbian language displays a duality of form in the adjectival domain. Serbian adjectives appear in two forms: the short form adjectives (henceforth SFA) and the long form adjectives (LFA). This is illustrated in

- (12) a. grubi            postupak                      b. grub            postupak  
           rough.LFA    act                                      rough.SFA       act

While in the older historical stages all the gender forms and all the cases had both forms, in the present day language the dichotomy is systematically displayed only by the nominative masculine form of the adjective. In dialects such as East-Herzegovinian, other genders also display the dichotomy, but only at the prosodic level, and only with some adjectives. Prescriptive grammars (and perhaps a few dialects still too) have the morphological marking used in oblique cases of the masculine gender (but most speakers generalize the LFA declension).

- (13) a. zèlenā                      knjiga                                      b. zelèna                      knjiga  
           green.LFA                      book.FSg                                      green.SFA                      book.FSg  
       c. grubog                      postupka                                      d. gruba                      postupka  
           rough.LFA.Gen                      act.GenSg                                      rough.SFA.Gen                      act.GenSg

Traditional grammars refer to the LFA and the SFA as the definite and the indefinite aspect of the adjective, respectively. The reason is that indeed the LFA tends to occur in definite and sepcific contexts, while the SFA is favored in the indefinite contexts and is the only form that may occur without a modificandum in the predicate position. However, the division is not that simple, as shown in detail in Stanković (2015), and LFAs do occur in non-specific contexts, just like SFAs can occur in definite environments. Most of them, however, can be shown to still stick to the simple generalization, i.e. the adjectives are within another, embedded, environment, which fits their nature (parentheticals, kind DP-level adjectives).

The sharpest differences between SFAs and LFAs are that LFAs cannot occur alone in the predicate position, as mentioned above, and that SFAs cannot modify kinds (in the sense of Carlson 1977).

- (14) a. Taj    televizor    je    star / \*stari.<sup>9</sup>  
           that    TV            is    old.SFA/LFA  
           ‘That TV is old.’

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<sup>9</sup> The example with the LFA is acceptable under an ellipsis parse, with an elided noun after the adjective, but this structure is orthogonal to the claim.



- b. Snežni / \*snežan      leopard    je    gotovo    izumro  
 snowy.LFA/SFA      leopard    is    almost    extinct  
 ‘The snow leopard is almost extinct.’

This difference strengthens the parallel between SFAs and nouns, since bear nouns also occur in the predicate position. Determiner items, just like LFAs, do not.

The facts about kind modification correctly predict that relational adjectives, which have been argued to be exclusively modifiers of the kind level (ARSENIJEVIĆ et al. 2012), will have only the long form.

- (15) a. mašinski                  vs. \*mašins(a)k                  b. letnji                  vs. \*letanj  
 mechanical.LFA                  mechanical.SFA                  summer.LFA                  summer.SFA

It is also relevant for the discussion in section 4 that for this reason, kind-modifying adjectives, including relational adjectives, cannot be paraphrased by a relative clause.

- (16) a. mašinski inženjer, ≠      \*inženjer koji je mašinski  
 mechanical engineer                  engineer which is mechanical  
 b. letnji raspored, ≠      \*raspored koji je letnji  
 summer schedule                  schedule which is summer

It is irrelevant for this paper what is the cause and what the effect between not having short forms and not being able to occur in the predicative use.

#### 4. Information structure of LFAs and SFAs, and of the modified noun

In this section, I present an empirical argument in favor of the presence of the DP in the syntax of Serbian nominals, coming from the SFA-LFA distinction. As already mentioned, one aspect in which definiteness and/or specificity, as interpretations typical of DP, play an important role in Serbian is in the distinction between the LFA and the SFA. As shown in Stanković (2015), only LFAs are used in referential contexts, when the adjective is restrictive and contributes to the identification of the referent, whether the referent is an individual or a kind. SFAs are used in (copular and secondary) predicates, appositions, expressions denoting properties and other instances of non-restrictive use.

- (17) CONTEXT: three watches on the desk, one green, one yellow, one red  
 Dodaj    mi      zeleni / #zelen    sat.  
 hand    me      green.LFA/SFA watch  
 ‘Hand me the green watch.’

As it is the case in most or all natural languages exhibiting the category of adjectives, Serbian adjectives occurring higher than the kind level typically can be paraphrased by relative clauses involving a copula and the adjective as the predicate.

- (18) svetao / svetli      zid =    zid    koji      je    svetao  
 light.SFA/LFA      wall    wall    which    is    light  
 ‘a light wall’                  ‘a wall which is light (in color)’





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## **ŠTA NAM INFORMACIJSKA STRUKTURA SRPSKOG PRIDEVSKOG VIDA MOŽE REĆI O STRUKTURI DETERMINATORSKE FRAZE**

Rad testira predikcije dvaju konkurentskih pogleda na sintaksičku strukturu imeničkog izraza u formalnoj sintaksi: Hipoteze o univerzalnosti DP-a i Hipoteze o DP-parametru, u oblasti prozodijskog ponašanja prideva određenog i neodređenog vida u srpskom jeziku. Predikcija prve hipoteze je da će oba vida pokazati istu prozodiju, koja će biti

slična prozodiji imenice. Predikcija potonje hipoteze je da će neodređeni vid imati prozodijsko ponašanje slično imenici, a neodređeni vid slično determinatorskim rečima. Test, zasnovan na parafrazama prideva putem relativnih klauza, u potpunosti je potvrdio predikcije Hipoteze o univerzalnosti DP-a.

*Ključne reči:* Hipoteza o DP parametru, Hipoteza o univerzalnom DPu, srpski jezik, pridevski vid, informacijska struktura, prozodija