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A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH TO THE PROTOTYPE MODEL OF EFL GRAMMAR TEACHING

Summary

This paper draws on the argument that prototype theory provides a more efficient EFL grammar tutorial for Serbian students. In line with R. W. Langacker (1991) and G. Leech (1994, 2000), if corpus linguistics and data driven learning are embraced by the theory, it will significantly enhance the understanding of English verb tenses for students. The major advantages of the novel EFL teaching methodology, namely the prototype driven approach to teaching English verb tenses, are (i) its potential to offer a new view of the verb tense system by mapping out a number of interwoven strands common to different tenses and, (ii) the complete abandonment of the narrowness of the traditional (classical) approach which asserts that tenses should be established by temporal adverbials.

Key words: prototype theory, English verb tenses, corpus linguistics, data driven learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Endless classification (categorization) is fundamental to human reasoning (cognition). The process makes sense of the world around us – namely of an infinite variety of entities with different substances, shapes, colours, tastes, etc. Cognitive categorization, therefore, most effectively eradicates chaos that is otherwise so inherent to our extralinguistic reality. Moreover, human language practice relies heavily on the use of cognitive linguistic categories that derive from such a classification.

In line with prototype theory postulates, i.e. a general theory of natural categories, categories are generally imprecise and they frequently involve stereotypes,

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fuzzy boundaries and family-like resemblances among the varieties in the category. The theory was first devised in the 1970's by E. Rosch and her co-workers. Prototype theory's explanatory potentials are so great that it has completely replaced the traditional model of classification.[1] Prototype is the best exemplar of a category which presupposes that not all members of the category have the same status − there is a focus or ideal representation of the category and its periphery. Those entities that belong to the periphery (or the fuzzy boundary) have a more or less dubious membership[2] (cf. also Geeraerts, 1989; Ungerer & Schmid, 1996; Taylor, 1995).

In 1982, G. Lakoff applied prototype theory to linguistic categories under the heading cognitive linguistics. He placed emphasis on the study of the semantic rather than the purely formal aspects of language, especially after it was understood that the first thing a native speaker looks at in a spoken and/or written utterance produced by a non-native speaker is its comprehensibility rather that its absolute grammaticality. In consequence, this particular linguist took a particular interest in elaborating on instances of prototypical category membership and boundary phenomena where category membership is unpredictable and dependent largely upon context and communicative purpose. In Lakoff's own words (1987: 4−5), categories must be regarded as abstract containers, with things either inside or outside the category if and only if they have certain properties in common. Similarity within categories is, thus, always highly relative and context-dependent.

Prototype has exhibited an extended use and application in phonology, syntax and diachronic lexical semantics (Wierzbicka, 1985; Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 1987). On this view, R. W. Langacker (1991) states that grammatical categories do have a prototype structure that is grounded in experience. Given this fact, prototype theory can and should be applied to grammar study, that is to say, prototypicality does have relevance to the categorization of the English tense system.[3] As prototype effects appear so vividly in the categorization of the tense system, prototype theory is methodologically useful for providing a theoretical framework within which it is possible to solve at least some of the problems associated with the English verb tense borderline example cases. The tense system itself is a cluster of related meanings.

Following J. R. Taylor (1995) and F. J. Zhang (2011), similar to lexical category, each tense category displays the same tendency of concatenation and radiation in the construction. For example, the concatenation nature of a tense is obvious

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1 Pursuant to the traditional model, conceptual categories are thought to have clear boundaries and also to be defined by common properties (distinctive features). Not a single category member is more typical (central or prominent) than any other member.

2 For example, within the 'birds' category sparrows are more typical birds than penguins, even though penguins are, undoubtedly, also birds.

3 Traditionally, tense of a verb denotes the "time" of the action.

from the chains such as *eat > be eating > have eaten > have been eating*, whereas the radiation nature of a tense, say the simple present tense, is displayed by the fact that simple present is used to express the idea that an action is repeated or usual (*John takes his dog for a walk in the morning*), even though it can also be used to talk about scheduled events in the near future (*The party starts at 8 o'clock*), or to express the idea that an action is/is not happening (*I am/am not here now*).

Numerous linguists (Bache, 1985, 1995; Binnick, 1991; Brisbard, 2005; Comrie, 1976; Vendler, 1967; Verkuyl, 1993), furthermore, point out the importance of the interaction between a verb tense and kinds of lexical aspect (*Aktionsart*). The lexical aspect of a verb is the inherent temporal structure of a situation as determined by the predicate and the context, for example events versus states are not morphologically marked in the language (by some sort of verbal inflection). Overall, then, the lexical aspect specifies how a verb relates to time, whether it has or does not have a natural endpoint, whether it is a *telic verb* or an *atelic verb* respectively. The lexical aspect of a verb is its objective lexical quality, i.e. it is the semantic realization of the verb. As a result, the lexical aspect needs to be distinguished from the grammatical aspect of a verb, that is to say its syntactic or morphological realization, or rather the subjective view of the speaker. At first aspect was treated as part of the tense system, but began to be distinguished as its own formal category by the early 1900′s (cf. Hatav, 1997).

In view of everything stated above, this paper will attempt to demonstrate a methodological innovation in teaching grammar, or the English verb tense system, to be more specific. We shall illustrate how prototype theory could offer a principled approach to the exemplification of form-meaning relationships within language as well as to the development of EFL teaching that commonly focuses upon specific aspects of the language system.

2. FLAWS OF THE ENGLISH VERB TENSE SYSTEM TEACHING IN SERBIAN SCHOOLS

Much to the non-native students' regret, and in spite of the foreign language teaching recommendations in favour of communicative language teaching, the Serbian syllabus in EFL teaching is predominantly grammar oriented. Yet, despite the frenetic pace of grammar study by native speakers of Serbian, the majority of these in-the-beginning-enthusiastic-but-soon-to-tire EFL learners simply end up lacking a fundamental understanding of the topic area. And to support and illustrate the point, we shall turn now to some examples of the mistaken transfer of Serbian verb tenses into the English language (where verb tense translations are faulty). All of the examples represent excerpts from students' works:

(1) *Sigmund Freud and Salvador Dally had met* (instead of accurate MET) *in London in July 1938 after Freud emigrated* (instead of accurate HAD EMI-GRATED) *from Vienna before the Nazis.*

(2) *Dragan Ignjatović was astonished to find out he has been dead* (instead of accurate HAD BEEN DEAD) *for eight years already.*[4]

(3) *Hold on to it vainly and eventually noone would be spared* (instead of accurate WILL BE).

(4) *We would like to announce that Ivan Vuković directed* (instead of accurate HAS BEEN DIRECTING) *Terry Jones' play "Hysteria" that is likely to premier ...*

(5) *Goran Jevtić states the author based* (instead of accurate HAS BASED) *his play upon a historic fact.*

The errors specified in (1) to (5) occurred most likely because both primary and secondary school EFL teachers tend to focus on relatively small databases of typical, that is to say clear-cut example sentences. As a result, marginal (non-typical yet equally empirical) examples are predominantly neglected. Moreover, tenses are taught in isolation, i.e. EFL instructors typically plow through simple present, then simple past, and simple future, completely disregarding the necessity of teaching together all of the present tenses, then all of the past, and then future.

The prototype theory where verb tense is taught in context is really about the idea that tense learning takes place in relation to other learning. For example, the simple present tense is best learned in relation to the present continuous, hence the complex sentence *I laugh a lot, but I am not laughing right now* demonstrates the contrast between a habitual activity (simple present) rather than one engaged in at the moment (present continuous). What makes the prototype approach plausible is that in actual linguistic practice this is how humans tend to use language. Thus, for instance, when a woman relates an incident that happened to her yesterday, she is going to tend to speak about past time for the duration of that story, perhaps switching between past progressive and simple past: *I was talking to Branka, and your boss appeared out of nowhere.* Most typically, there shall be no sudden switch to present or future tense until perhaps the end: *Now I have some shopping to do.* It is essential, therefore, for EFL instructions to start off firstly by giving an overview of the entire verb system in different time frames. Nevertheless, it is to be remembered the ultimate goal is not only to make EFL students fully aware of the variety of tenses but also to lead them towards gaining a profound understanding of how these tenses relate to each other. (Charts such as Table 1 appendixed to this paper are most helpful in achieving these goals).

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4 The man was mistakenly pronounced dead.

APPENDIX 1 – TABLE 1: ACTIVE VERB TENSES CHART

	PRESENT	PAST	FUTURE
SIMPLE	He *BUILDS* houses (he is a mason)	He *BUILT* a new house (it's finished)	He'*LL BUILD* a house (he plans building it)
TARGET CONCEPT	FACTUAL STATEMENT / ČINJENICA	COMPLETED PAST ACTIVITY / SVRŠENOST	FUTURE PLAN / PLAN ZA BUDUĆNOST
CONTINUOUS	He *IS BUILDING* a new house this year (its building is taking place in the time surrounding 'now', its completion being uncertain)	He *WAS BUILDING* a new house (its building took time but it still could not be completed)	He *WILL* surely *BE BUILDING* a new house when you turn 18 (its building is going to take place but its completion is questionable)
TARGET CONCEPT	CONTINUING PRESENT ACTION (COMPLETION UNCERTAIN) / RADNJA KOJA TRAJE OKO 'NOW' (ZAVRŠETAK NEIZVESTAN)	CONTINUING PAST ACTION (COMPLETION UNCERTAIN) / PROŠLA RADNJA KOJA JE TRAJALA OKO TRENUTKA ISKAZANOG SIMPLE PAST-OM (ZAVRŠETAK NEIZVESTAN)	CONTINUING FUTURE ACTION (COMPLETION UNCERTAIN) / RADNJA KOJA ĆE TRAJATI OKO NEKOG TRENUTKA U BUDUĆNOSTI (ZAVRŠETAK NEIZVESTAN)
PERFECT	He *HAS BUILT* many beautiful houses (building began at an unspecified time in the past and has finished more recently, conclusive with 'now')	He *HAD BUILT* a new house but he soon died (the building ended before sth else happened)	He *WILL HAVE BUILT* a new house by the time you marry (the building will end before sth else happens)
TARGET CONCEPT	PAST ACTION COMPLETED IN A MORE RECENT TIME CONCLUSIVE WITH 'NOW' / RADNJA ZAVRŠENA ZAKLJUČNO SA 'NOW'	COMPLETED PAST ACTIVITY THAT ENDED BEFORE ANOTHER PAST ACTION / PROŠLA RADNJA KOJA SE ZAVRŠILA PRE NEKE DRUGE PROŠLE RADNJE	FUTURE ACTION THAT WILL END BEFORE ANOTHER FUTURE ACTION / BUDUĆA RADNJA KOJA ĆE SE ZAVRŠITI PRE NEKE DRUGE BUDUĆE RADNJE
PERFECT CONTINUOUS	He *HAS BEEN BUILDING* a new house for three years now (building started in the past and is continuing now and will probably continue in the future)	He *HAD BEEN BUILDING* a new house for two years when he finally took a loan (building started and continued up in the past before sth else happened, and perhaps then it just went on)	He *WILL HAVE BEEN BUILDING* new house [a] (building will start and continue up in the future before sth else happens, and perhaps then it will just go on)
TARGET CONCEPT	CONTINUING ACTION CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT (POSSIBLY FUTURE) / RADNJA ZAPOČETA U PROŠLOSTI KOJA I DALJE TRAJE	ACTION CONTINUING IN THE PAST BEFORE ANOTHER PAST ACTION. / PROŠLA RADNJA KOJA JE TRAJALA PRE NEKE DRUGE PROŠLE RADNJE, A MOGUĆE JE DA SE I NAKON TOGA NASTAVILA	ACTION CONTINUING IN THE FUTURE BEFORE ANOTHER FUTURE ACTION / BUDUĆA RADNJA KOJA ĆE TRAJATI PRE NEKE DRUGE BUDUĆE RADNJE, A MOGUĆE JE DA ĆE SE I NAKON TOGA NASTAVITI

Following the same line of thought, it is important to point out that verb tenses are anything but clearly defined categories. What is being suggested here is that EFL teachers should try much harder to exploit the prototypical nature of the English verb tense system. Teachers should be doing it aware of the fact that, according to the already observed, boundaries of the tenses are as fuzzy as any other category. In addition to this and much to the disgrace of the currently available grammar and other EFL textbooks, Serbian students who are learning how to speak English are commonly misled by largely non-empirically based teaching materials. They are taught to believe temporal adverbials (adverbials that make reference to specific time intervals) should generally guide them in their choice of the correct verb tense. Given that, a non-native English-speaking student in Serbia is conditioned to almost blindly opt for the present perfect tense with the temporal adverbials such as *already*, *ever*, *never*, *just*, *yet*, etc., for the present continuous tense with *now*, *at the moment*, *this (something)*, and/or for the past perfect tense (usually in combination with the simple past tense) with the adverbials *before* or *after*.

We cannot emphasize strongly enough how essentially wrong this traditional approach to the English verb tense system teaching is and the immense translation as well as other problems it can pose for Serbian EFL learners. Most noticeably, there are some really outstanding exceptions to such faulty guidelines. One should do no more then refer to the following example sentences: *We reached L.A. JUST as the sun was setting* (not **We reached L.A. JUST as the sun has been setting*); *I found my reading glasses THIS MORNING but NOW I have lost them again* (not **I found my reading glasses THIS MORNING but NOW I am losing them again*); and/or *Did you lock the door BEFORE you left the house?* (not **Had you locked the door BEFORE …?*), etc. The problematic issue may be even better illuminated by looking into all possible distribution options of the temporal adverbial *never*, so common with a variety of the English verb tenses even though the Serbian EFL students are basically taught to associate *never* exclusively with present perfect; e.g. *I've NEVER heard anything like this before in my life* or *Sue has NEVER been to Paris* and *Will has NEVER liked her much*, etc.

Let us now turn to a different set of striking examples, which prove very well how fundamentally wrong it is to teach non-native English-speaking students to exploit adverbial guidelines to determine a verb tense:

(6) *I NEVER drink whiskey* (simple present)
(7) *My son will NEVER (EVER)[5] forgive you* (simple future)
(8) *I NEVER said that (e.g. that I liked Julia)!* (simple past)

5 Puts an emphasis on the statement.

(9) *We had NEVER had so much money before* (past perfect)

(10) *Susan is NEVER smiling* (present continuous)

(11) *While a teenager, Ginnie was NEVER coming home on time* (past continuous)

(12) *John has NEVER been doing this before* (present perfect continouos)

(13) *They had NEVER been doing so much homework like when he was in the grammar school* (past perfect continuous)

(14) *I'm sure, he'll NEVER be speaking to you again* (future perfect continuous).

Obviously, the classic analytic tools according to which *never* combines with the present perfect are of no use in (6) to (14) sentences. Instead, as it was mentioned earlier, the analytic tools which are currently deployed in the analysis of the English verb tenses teaching should proceed along the lines of methodologies derived from conversation analysis that are corpus (empirically) based. This would most certainly provide students with a far better possibility for a more fully evidence-based approach to linguistics (Adolphs et al, 2004). After all, the relationship between the meaning of a verb and a specific type of situation is not absolute (cf. Bache 1995: 230). Some verbs can have completely different meanings, depending on the sentential context:

(15) *I think you are an idiot* (the verb 'think' denotes a state (of cognition))

(16) *What are you doing? – I'm thinking* ('think' describes a cognitive activity (of thinking)).

More recently, a number of linguists (Stubbs, 2001; Sinclair, 2004; Hoey, 2005), have argued that digital and/or computer corpora archiving primarily transcribed spoken English language, e.g. the Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (the Cancode corpus). It can be researched with the publisher's specially designed software. Revolutionary corpus-based, spoken language teaching can provide access to information not easily available from other sources, such as unconstrained natural speech and regular, repeatable features of interaction, information on the frequency of certain patterns in various text types (e.g. a particular tense occurrence), language varieties across different social contexts (sociolinguistic profiling), etc. In short, computer and other corpora firmly established as research tools in corpus linguistics can be a good reminder of frequent uses which might otherwise be ignored. These tools rely upon a large portion of spoken language. A corpus-based instruction has, therefore, been praised as the new revolution in language teaching. It was J. Sinclair (2004) who initially proposed this particular teaching method should be used to handle lexis, with

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meaning being created and interpreted through context. The two major ideas of Sinclair's Contextual Approach implying the interdependence of lexis and grammar, and the idiom principle, constitute a major challenge for linguistic theory, language description and all language applications, but in no field is the challenge more acute than in foreign language learning and teaching.

As far back as the mid 1980's, some EFL lecturers began seeking for the alternative ways of teaching English grammar to non-native speakers (cf. Swan, 1985). Elaborating on their observations, M. Lewis (1993: 149) has likewise imposed a heavy criticism on the traditional ways of grammar teaching, simultaneously underlining "the dubious value of grammar explanations" and advising teachers to treat them "with some scepticism" (p. 184). Lewis's idea is that language teaching should focus on word grammar (collocation and cognates) and text grammar (supra-sentential features), rather than a classic case of traditional grammar teaching (p. 3). The author takes this even further in his later publication (2002: 41), by advocating the lexical approach, namely he suggests the revision of the grammar syllabus. Lewis' alterations imply lexical phrases should be treated as part of sentence grammar, whereas the current role of sentence grammar should be extensively decreased at least until post-intermediate 3 levels.[6]

3. A BALANCED VIEW OF ENGLISH VERB TENSES TEACHING

In this section we argue that only a balanced view, which takes into account both the strengths and weaknesses of the prototype theory oriented EFL teaching, can ensure the successful integration of English verb tenses into Serbian EFL classrooms. As for the literature on English tenses, it is so vast that we will not attempt its summary here. Mostly, because it has little worth for a profound understanding of the matter by Serbian students.

The exponential rise in publications on the subject, however, marks the striking importance of the issue which remains up to this very day one of the acute problems demanding to be rightfully tackled. The prototypical approach to grammar study has been flagged as a purposeful teaching tool by many distinguished EFL scholars (cf. Swan, 1993), all of whom are seeking for ways to contribute to the practical concerns of delivering justly English verb tenses to EFL students. Yet, such efforts are exceptions rather than the rule.

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6 According to M. Swan (2006: 5), language-teaching fashions commonly oscillate from one extreme to the other; either grammar is given star billing, or it is backgrounded or completely ignored.

As for ourselves, we strongly believe that English verb tenses are to be explained within 'the target concept system'. Thus, for example, we suggest Serbian students should be taught that the simple present is employed to refer to the target concept that we here decide to call 'the factual statement' (Table 1). Such an all-embracing, umbrella term covers or applies to the traditionally approved labels, among which (A) eternal truths,[7] general time, etc. and (B) habitual routine/actions, here exemplified with the following:

(A)
(17) *Water boils at 100 ⁰ C.*
(18) *Elephants are mammals.*
(19) *Dragana is a superb opera singer*.
(B)
(20) *She sees me twice a week.*
(21) *My parents enjoy working in the garden.*
(22) *His father listens to the BBC news every Sunday.*

The suggested teaching method will be practical to account for a number of important things. To begin with, 'the factual statement' target concept is to remove the necessity of having misleading temporal adverbials in every example sentence expressing a verb tense as it is the case with a vast number of examples retrieved from contemporary, empirically established corpora. Secondly, the approach will also facilitate an explanation to EFL students of the following English sentences:

(23) *I sleep every day* (even if I don't).
(24) *Miriam has blue eyes* (even if she sometimes/occasionally wears brown contact lenses).

as it is a fact (or a factual statement) that I have to sleep on more or less a regular basis, else I would have hallucinogenic experiences and/or would eventually drop unconscious. In a similar fashion, the blue colour of Miriam's eyes is a fact, though the colour in question may, of course, also be temporarily disguised by contact lenses of another colour. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the factual statement target concept approach will give an acceptable explanation (reason) for the grammaticality of the sentences displaying inclusion relations between categories. For example:

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7   The term has been taken over from R. Quirk, S. Greenbaum, G. Leech & J. Svartvik (1972: 85).

(25) *The train leaves tonight at 10.30.*
(26) *I hope it rains tomorrow.*

These exemplify fuzzy boundaries where the simple present tense domain partially overlaps the simple future tense domain. True, these particular sentences are formally structured as simple present tense example-utterances, even though they are used to talk about future events. Or are they really? This may illustrate why the English verb tense system is a major stumbling block to acquiring a good command of the language by the Serbian EFL students. Verb tenses do create havoc in academic writing and pose troubles for so many students to whom English is a foreign/second language. Bearing in mind, therefore, train timetables are typically not subject to instant changes and being fully conscious of the herein-above specified factual statement target concept, an EFL student should find it far easier to understand why the sentence has been structured in the simple present tense mode. It is the habitual departure time of the train we are talking about, i.e. the case in fact that this particular train leaves at 5.30 pm; it did so yesterday, it is doing and will do so today and tomorrow respectively, as well as the day after tomorrow, etc. Fourthly and lastly, but related to the first three, the factual statement concept is also viable to explain why certain verbs, here labelled 'the factual verbs', such as *hear*, *smell*, *see*, *recognize*, *notice*, *know*, *understand*, *suppose*, *mean*, *remember*, *want*, *hope*, *decide*, *agree/disagree*, *adore/love*, *loathe/detest*, *possess/own/belong*, etc., orbit around or at least in the very close proximity to the simple present tense category core. They most commonly demand simple, namely non-progressive (non-continuous) verb tense formats (hence the sentence *I hope it rains tomorrow*). Admittedly, Serbian ON ZNA ODGOVOR and DOBRO IH SE SEĆAM translate accurately into English *He knows the answer* (not ∗*He is knowing the answer*) and *I remember them well* (not ∗*I am remembering them well*) respectively. Unless prototype theory as well as prototypical core meaning ideas are embraced by the Serbian EFL teachers, non-native English-speaking students will remain puzzled as to why ∗*He is knowing the answer* represents a faulty sentence. Here, the male person talked about knows the answer at the present time which is most accurately expressed by the temporal adverbials *now* and *at the/this moment*, both typically associated with the present continuous.

Given the idea outlined above, that English verb tenses create an interwoven system of graded centrality, that is to say not all members of a particular tense category have equal status, for some get judged better (more representative) than others. (Croft & Cruse, 2004: 77) The prototype-based grammar approach can also provide a basis for an account of the multi-faced verb tense syndrome. In

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sum, this brings us to the actuality that English grammatical aspect (perfective vs. imperfective) interacts with tense (cf. Novakov, 2005).

Following Z. Vendler's (1967) four-way typology of verb classes into (i) states, e.g. *know*, (ii) activities, e.g. *laugh*, (iii) accomplishments, e.g. *make a cake*, and (iv) achievements, e.g. *win the medal*, linguistic scholars have preoccupied themselves with research on the telic/atelic distinction (Slabakova, 2001; Novakov, 2009). Telicity has been known to represent a semantic notion, a reflection of the idea that complex events have an internal structure which is associated with a property of an event having or not having a natural endpoint (cf. also Giorgi & Pianesi, 2001). Pursuant to this distinction, perfective aspect marks to telic verbs having a natural endpoint (accomplishments and achievements of a certain goal, the telos or *terminus ad quem*), whereas states and activities illustrate atelic verbs not having a natural endpoint.

In consequence, there are 12 active English verb tenses obtained by combinations of different tense categories (present, past, future) and grammatical aspects (Table 1). So, for example, within the present time frame, there are three aspects commonly used: simple, continuous, and perfect. To shed more light on the multi-faced verb tense syndrome, it will suffice for now to say that prototypically simple present tense has both its past and future correspondent in simple past tense and simple future tense respectively, similarly to the present continuous tense and its past continuous tense and future continuous tense correspondents respectively, as well as the present perfect tense mirrored by both past perfect tense and future perfect tense respectively, etc. (Table 1). Some examples bellow are illustrative of this:

(27) *Susan has blue eyes* (simple present)
(28) *Susan had blue eyes* (simple past)[8]
(29) *Our daughter will have blue eyes* (future simple)

(30) *Their baby <u>is</u> always crying* (present continuous)[9]
(31) (*When he was a baby*) *he was always crying* (past continuos)
(32) *There baby will always be crying* (future continuous)

(33) *John has seen her queuing in front of the post office* (present perfect)

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8   Implies Susan is dead now.

9   In addition to expressing the speaker's irritation with the baby, the sentence also demonstrates a non-typical administration of the temporal adverbial *always* that is traditionally associated with simple present tense.

(34) (*John desperately wanted to ring Gloria*), *after he had seen her queuing in front of the post office* (past perfect)

(35) *John will have seen her in front of the post office again by the time your plane takes off* (future perfect)

(36) *He has already been driving for more than 24 hours* (present perfect continuous)

(37) *He had already been driving for more than 24 hours when he was stopped by the police* (past perfect continuous)

(38) *He will already have been driving for more than 24 hours by the time he gets to the Mexican border* (future perfect continuous).

The conclusion clearly follows from the evidence that humans ubiquitously conceptulize one tense domain in terms of another tense domain. This actually implies that English verb tenses indeed make up tense categories with various verb tenses being in subcategories which are subordinate to a central label. Each subcategory, furthermore, should be attributed one target concept (or a key phrase) that will embrace its true nature. A collection of corpus retrieved example sentences should be verified against these labels as either belonging to one or another verb tense subcategory. Thus, for example, in the case of the simple past the target concept should be 'the completed/terminated action' or 'definite/terminated past'[10] as it is the case in:

(39) *Leo died in his sleep* (he could have been dying for years prior to the event)

(40) *Sheila made a beautiful cake* (she could have had a series of failures prior to finally making that beautiful cake)

(41) *Ralph finished his report* (perhaps it took him a year, two, even more to do so).

The focus of attention in (39), (40) and (41) is terminativity. The phenomenon implicates the completion/definition of the past action, and possibly the attainment of a certain goal, not the time period which could have been consumed prior to such a completion. Apparently, the message that so clearly shines through this, as well as all other examples, provided by our paper, goes as follows: whenever learning/expressing a particular English verb tense, an EFL student should attend to the specific time interval when the action occurs, rather than look for help in a temporal adverbial that can so often be a largely misleading indicator.

10 This label is Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svartvik's (1972: 86).

4. CONCLUSION

Our intention in this paper has been to suggest ways in which a new prototypical approach may be mapped out and exploited by both EFL lecturers and students when dealing with the English verb tense system. An interdisciplinary approach which combines prototype theory and EFL grammar teaching to Serbian students is absolutely vital if applied linguistics is to yield a new discipline which might be called *prototypical grammar*. With respect to this, the possible contribution of corpus linguistics and data driven learning to the field is immense. It follows then, that a temporal frame – namely, a time period within which an event, state, process, or action is set is no longer to be specified by temporal adverbials in EFL classes. Based on our experience in EFL teaching, we have come to understand that many ungrammatical outputs in a second language (L2), especially when rendering a translation from a first language (L1) to L2, here Serbian to English respectively, result from the mistaken associations of a temporal adverbial with a verb tense. For example *never* equals present perfect (cf. examples 6−14). Such errors are common even among students with a very good command of the languages involved. As it was observed earlier, non-native English-speakers, Serbian students alike, should be taught instead to look for temporal points of orientation within the internal temporal constituency of a (type of) situation denoted by a given predicate (cf. Bache 1985: 10). Given this fact, the category of tense needs to be understood not only as the temporal situation of an action relative to the moment of utterance, but also how one tense domain should be judged in terms of another tense domain. This shall provide an explanation for why not all members of a tense category have the same status (focus/prototype entities vs. periphery/ fuzzy boundary entities).

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KORPUSNO UTEMELJEN PROTOTIPSKI MODEL
UČENJA GRAMATIKE ENGLESKOG JEZIKA
KAO STRANOG JEZIKA

Sažetak

Rad se bavi implikacijama koje teorija prototipa može imati na efikasniju nastavu gramatike engleskog jezika kao stranog jezika, ili kraće EFL-a (prema engl. *English as a Foreign Language*). Po uzoru na W. R. Langackera (1991) i G. Leecha (1994, 2000), ako bi teorija obuhvatila korpusnu lingvistiku i tehniku učenja na primerima preuzetim iz engleskog jezika, to bi značajno unapredilo učeničko razumevanje sistema engleskih glagolskih vremena. Glavna prednost novog pristupa metodologiji nastave EFL-a, rečju prototipski utemeljenog pristupa nastavi engleskih glagolskih vremena jesu: (1) potencijal teorije da ponudi novo viđenje sistema engleskih glagolskih vremena ukazivanjem na neka svojstva/osobine koja/e su zajedničke različitim glagolskim vremenima; (2) potpuno odustajanje od tradicionalnog (klasičnog) pristupa utemeljenog prevashodno na povezivanju glagolskih vremena sa klasterima njima pripadajućih priloških odredbi.

Ključne reči: teorija prototipa, glagolska vremena engleskog jezika, korpusna lingvistika, učenje utemeljeno na podacima.