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Original work by Andrea Artoni

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## Slavic Linguistics Webinars

# There are three theme vowels in BCS and /a/ is not one of them: arguments from the 3PL.PRS allomorphy

Jelena Stojković – Justus Liebig University Giessen  
(joint work with Marko Simonović)

In contemporary literature on Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS) verbal system, four theme vowels in the present tense are observed: /-e-/, /-je-/, /-i-/, and /-a-/, with the last two employed most frequently (~70% of all verbs in the *Database of the Western South Slavic Verbal System*, cf. Milosavljević & Arsenijević 2022). We put to test the findings of previous morpho-syntactic accounts on the TV system in BCS from the phonological perspective, i.e. the allomorphy of the marker for 3PL.PRS. Following Inkelas et al.'s (1997), we argue that the 3PL.PRS allomorphy stems from a single, abstract UR. Repairing the hiatus created by TV and 3PL.PRS renders, however, the four-TV system untenable. The solution, we claim, is to rethink /-a-/ as a verbaliser that always overpowers the TV /-e-/ in a hiatus, only visible in the 3PL.PRS allomorphy. Such an approach allows answering additional questions concerning the structure of verbal stems in Slavic, like the status of null TVs and the role of verbalisers.

Organising committee:

Daniele Artoni ([daniele.artoni@univr.it](mailto:daniele.artoni@univr.it)), Marco Biasio ([marco.biasio@unimore.it](mailto:marco.biasio@unimore.it)), Jelena Živojinović ([jelena.zivojinovic@uni-graz.at](mailto:jelena.zivojinovic@uni-graz.at))