On a serbo-croatian language game and what it tells us about Deep Structure

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The goal of that communication is twofold: a) presenting part of new data from a Serbo-Croatian language game known as 'šatrovački'; b) showing what those data tell us about Deep Structure and how some of them truly argue in favour of the existence of Final Empty Nuclei.

(1) Šatrovački is a Serbo-Croatian language game, or ludling (see Laycock 1972) pretty close to French verlan (see among others Bagemihl 1989, Plénat 1992, 1995). On the descriptive level, it can be said that this game is based on a total reversal of syllables

(2) Some examples (Rizzolo, 2004) :

(3) Points of relevance in table (2) are the following :

	šatrovački	standard Serbo-Croatian	gloss
1.	bəhle	hleb	*bread*
2.	čəbe	beč	*Vienna*
3.	cəvi	vic	*joke*
4.	ftəli	lift	*lift*
5.	fuka	kafa	*coffee*
6.	zikra	kriza	*crisis*
7.	cimba	bacim	*I throw*
8.	zdibaš	bazdiš	*you stink*
9.	ravaku	kurava	*prostitute*
10.	vanjedu	duvanje	*smoking (slang)*
11.	zivoje	jezivo	*disgusting*

    a)   the quality of some final vowels is changing through reversal : 'kaf**a**' > 'f**u**ka' *coffee*. An explanation can be sought in the interaction of morphosyntax and phonology.

b) flexion and reversal do interact : sometimes flexion (nominal or verbal) applies first then the term is reversed, 'baci-(ti)' *(to) throw* > 'baci-m' *i throw* > 'cimba' ; sometimes, the term is reversed then flexion applies, 'bazdi-(ti)' *(to) stink* > 'zdiba' > 'zdiba-š' *you stink*. This is an interesting point since it raises the question of the interaction of morphology (here flexion) and phonology (here reversal).

c) At last, the most interesting point here is the behaviour of closed monosyllabic words (1. to 4. in the table under (2)). What is striking is that they all become dissylabic and all display a schwa when reversed. This fact is puzzling when we know that this phoneme is not present in the inventory of Serbo-Croatian.

(4) The last point exposed here (eg. (3) c)) will be developed in this communication. It will be used as an argument for the existence of Final Empty Nuclei (see, for example, Kaye 1990). Some similar data from French verlan will be added as supporting evidence.

(5) References (some) :

Bagemihl, Bruce. 1989. The crossing constraint and 'backward languages'. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 7.4*, 481-549.

Kaye, Jonathan 1990. 'Coda' licensing. *Phonology Yearbook 7.2*, 301-330.

Plénat, Marc 1992. Notes sur la morphologie du verlan: données et hypothèses. *Cahiers de grammaire 17*, 171-208.

Plénat, Marc 1995. Une approche prosodique de la morphologie du verlan. In J. Durand & M.-A. Hintze (eds.). *French Phonology : Morae, Syllables, Words* [= Lingua 95, 1-3].

Rizzolo, Olivier 2004. Šatrovački: la construction d'un corpus de verlan serbo-croate. *Corpus 3 (usage des corpus en phonologie)*: 261-310.