

# Comprehension of Danish after 20 years in Denmark: The interpretation of anaphors in subordinate clauses

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Unlike Danish, Serbo-Croatian is a pro-drop language and the subject in a final subordinate clause is left out if it is co-referential with the preceding matrix subject. An explicit pronominal subject in a subordinate clause is therefore usually interpreted as not being coreferential with the matrix subject. Using self-paced reading, twelve Serbo-Croatian immigrants were compared with twelve native speakers of Danish on reading sentences with a final adverbial clause with a pronominal subject. The end of the adverbial clause made it clearer whether the pronominal subject was co-referential with the subject or the oblique constituent in the matrix clause (e.g., *The son<sub>i</sub> calls his father, while he<sub>i</sub> is playing in the jungle gym* or *The son<sub>i</sub> calls his father, while he<sub>j</sub> is paying for petrol at the petrol station*). As predicted, there was an interaction between participant type (Serbo-Croatian vs. Danish) and co-referentiality (matrix subject vs. oblique). The Serbo-Croatian participants read the relevant part of the adverbial clause significantly more slowly when the pronoun was co-referential with the matrix subject. The difference in reading time was not significant for the Danish controls. We point to the importance of an awareness of the typological differences in pedagogical settings.

**KEYWORDS:** pro-drop, anaphor resolution, Serbo-Croatian, Danish, second language acquisition