

Original Scientific Paper  
UDC: 811.63.41'367.633  
811.163.41'367.3  
DOI: 10.5937/zrffp54-47724

# SPECIFIC TELIC CONSTRUCTIONS WITH THE PREPOSITION *DO* IN SERBIAN

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Received: November 15, 2023

Accepted: September 24, 2024

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*Keywords:*  
preposition *do* [*to*];  
telic construction;  
context;  
ground;  
pragmatics.

*Abstract.* This paper examines the specifics of the Serbian preposition *do* [*to*] in so-called telic constructions, which express the involvement of the sentence subject in collective activities related to a location (ground). The authors demonstrate that, unlike the prototypical prepositions *u* [*in*], *na* [*on*], and *kod* [*at*], the Serbian preposition *do* indicates, due to its reinterpretation as expressing dynamic spatial relations, that the subject has reached a particular location (or area of the ground) with the intention of achieving a specific goal, but that their presence at this location will be relatively brief. This characteristic suggests that the subject's intention can be connected to a telic interpretation. If the intention cannot be associated with this interpretation, the reasons for the subject's behavior can be inferred from the context or explicitly stated.

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<sup>4</sup> This paper is part of the project 178014 *Dinamika i struktura srpskog jezika* of the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia.

## *Introduction*

The aim of this paper is to explore the particularities of using the preposition *do* with two different types of lexemes: a) those that, while primarily spatial, express the idea of participating in a collective activity in a specific context (Ašić & Corblin, 2014; 2016); and b) those that, as they denote occupations, indicate the reason why the subject establishes contact with them. In order to do this, the authors start from Milka Ivić's research on sentences of the type *Otišla je do/kod majke* [*She's gone to her mother's*], where the preposition *do* [*to*] carries an additional piece of information (*and will not stay there for very long*), as opposed to the preposition *kod* (Ивић, 1999). Additionally, the authors compare the constructions with the preposition *do* to those containing the prepositions *na*, *u*, and *kod*, previously analyzed (Ašić & Corblin, 2014; 2016) and indicating both similarities and differences in their interpretations.

## *On the Theoretical Background and Methodology*

This paper builds on recent research into so-called telic prepositions in English, French, and Serbian and the notion of definiteness (Corblin, 2011; Ašić & Corblin, 2014). The goal is to offer a clear definition of this specific usage of *do* in light of previous findings related to the prepositions *na* and *u*. The analyzed examples were not excerpted from electronic corpora but were sourced from the authors' own collection of illustrations, reflecting actual language usage as assessed by native Serbian speakers' linguistic intuition.

## *On the Preposition do*

When used to express a static meaning, the preposition *do* [*to*] is synonymous with the preposition *pored* [*beside, next to*] (Антонић, 2007), denoting the spatial proximity of the located object and the locating entity (or the Figure and the

Ground, in cognitive linguistic terms; Talmy, 2000). While it does not specify the nature of their relationship, it might suggest close proximity.

(1) Dušan stoji do prozora.<sup>5</sup> [Dušan is standing next to the window.]

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the preposition examined in this study carries the information that one's being at a specific location is brief, which makes it comparable with the preposition *kod* [at], as shown in Milka Ivić's article (1999): in contrast to *kod*, *do* emphasizes the limited nature of a certain situation while providing information about *involvement with the sphere* of what the genitive construction indicates. This will be discussed in more detail in one of the following sections.

In her work on the system of prepositional constructions in Serbo-Croatian, Ivić (Ивић, 1957, p. 144) emphasized that the spatial genitive with *do* marks the measurement of distance, specifically, the distance to an end point. Namely, in its dynamic usage, this preposition indicates the ultimate or end goal of movement, conceptualizing the positioning of a movable entity (the Figure) within the sphere of the reference entity (the location or the Ground). While direct physical contact between the two entities is possible, it is not required.

(2) Trkamo se do ograde. [We're racing to the fence.]

(3) Uz pomoć vodiča došli smo do spomenika Karlu Velikom. [With the help of our guide, we reached the monument of Charles the Great.]

### *On Specific Interpretations of Constructions with do Involving Spatial Entities*

There are prepositional phrases with *do* which imply that the Figure is situated within the reference object but only during a time frame which is pragmatically interpreted as brief.

(4) Mira je otišla do kuhinje. [Mira has gone to the kitchen.]

In cases where reaching the reference object does not present a challenge, the interlocutor may interpret the information that the Figure has arrived at the Ground as irrelevant. Consequently, they may conclude that the speaker's intention is to indicate that the subject has established an abstract relationship with the site that was the goal of their movement. This context is where one should look for the key to understanding this specific meaning of the preposition *do*. If an abstract relation is established with the Ground, it follows that

<sup>5</sup> Compare: *Sedi pored—? do mene ali ostavi prostora da spustim torbu.* [Sit beside—next to me, but make some room for my bag.]

the location has a specific purpose—the Figure has reached the reference object with the intention of performing an action there.

Consequently, examples like (4) imply intentionality—the subject is pursuing a specific goal. Their temporal boundedness appears to result from the fact that even the principal dynamic spatial meaning of this preposition emphasizes reaching the end point of a trajectory without crossing the boundary of the Ground. In contrast, *do* frequently suggests continuation of the movement, either by proceeding to another location or by returning to the starting point. This is because the preposition emphasizes reaching the end point rather than staying within its boundaries. Consequently, the relationship between the located object and the location can be interpreted as momentary or short-lived.

(5) Do Bara su došli vozom, odatle će brodom za Bari. [They've come to Bar by train. From there, they're taking a boat to Bari.]

(6) Dotrčali smo do parka, pa sad možemo natrag.<sup>6</sup> [We've jogged to the park, so now we can head back.]

The above examples can be compared to Example (7) below, which expresses the intention of staying within the site boundaries.

(7) Došli smo u park. [We've come to the park.]

Earlier research (Ašić & Corblin, 2014; 2016) examined telic constructions with the prepositions *na*, *u*, and *kod*. We postulate that contrasting these structures with the usage of the preposition *do*, as illustrated, can reveal similarities between them while highlighting and elucidating its telic meaning.

It is important to understand that the telic interpretation of an activity as being performed at a site or using the services of the Ground arises from the interplay of multiple semantic factors, including the lexical quality of the noun, its status in the sentence, the type of preposition used in the construction, the properties of the subject, and the semantic properties of the verbs used with the preposition.

The first factor relates to the telicity of the lexical structure of the noun complementing the preposition. Contemporary formal lexical semantics (Pustejovsky, 1995; Asher, 2011) supports the idea that the structure of words is complex, with multiple levels of semantic representation, enabling them to interact with other words and convey diverse meanings in various linguistic contexts.

The complexity of a lexeme's semantic structure is defined in terms of so-called qualia relations, which denote the analytical knowledge associated with lexemes and concern different ways of describing entities (Pustejovsky, 1995). The qualia structure comprises four dimensions: constitutive, formal, agentive,

<sup>6</sup> Also compare *Stigli su u Beograd* [They've arrived in Belgrade.] and *Stigli su do Beograda* [They've reached—come to Belgrade.].

and telic.<sup>7</sup> The telic qualia, central to this analysis, relate to the basic functions and purposes of an entity (e.g., a cake is meant to be eaten, whereas a book is meant to be read). Nouns occurring in telic prepositional constructions must have clear and specific telic qualia (purpose) that are instantaneously activated in particular linguistic contexts. Examples include *school* (where one learns), *hospital* (where one receives medical treatment), *beach* (where one relaxes and swims), *cinema* (where one watches movies), *prison* (where one serves a sentence), *market* (where items are bought), and *church* (where one attends services and/or prays).

As an illustration, Example (8) indicates that the sentence subject is in hospital to receive a treatment, while Example (9) that the person has gone shopping for groceries.

(8) *Moja baka je u bolnici.* [My grandmother is in hospital.]

(9) *Moj otac je otišao na pijacu.* [My father has gone to the farmer's market.]

If the noun does not have an automatically identifiable purpose, the prepositional construction is interpreted as exclusively spatial:

(10) *Vuk je otišao u svoju sobu.* [Vuk has gone to his room.]

(11) *Hajdemo u baštu. Tamo je prijatno da se sedi.* [Let's go to the garden. It's pleasant to sit there.]

(12) *Željan sam svežeg vazduha. Za vikend idem u šumu.* [I long for some fresh air. I'm going to the woods for the weekend.]

However, when the preposition *do* is concerned, its primary focus is not on the subject's change of location, as emphasized, but rather on goal-directed movement to another place. Purposeless motion is not characteristic of humans as conscious beings. Since the noun *room* does not have inherent telic qualia, the purpose of going there is usually explicitly stated.

(13) *Dušan je otišao do svoje sobe po tablet/da donese veš za pranje.* [Dušan has gone to his room to get his tablet/to bring his laundry.]

(14) *Hajdemo do bašte. Hoću da ti pokažem kako su mi procvetale ruže.* [Let's go to the garden. I want you to see my roses in bloom.]

(15) *Moram do sela. Ponestalo mi je šećera i ulja.* [I need to go to the village. I've run out of sugar and oil.]

It should be noted that, in the latter case, activities can last longer, but pragmatically, their duration is interpreted as relatively brief since they serve to accomplish a specific task rather than involve an extended stay at the Ground.

<sup>7</sup> The constitutive qualia indicate what something is made of, the formal qualia refer to the broader category to which an object belongs, and the agentive qualia describe how something came into existence.

Metaphorically, the Figure's presence in the sphere of the Ground is viewed as so brief that the Ground's outer boundary remains relatively intact. Therefore, when intention is not implied and when emphasis is on leaving a permanent place of residence (which may include a temporary stay at the reference object), it is much more natural to use the preposition *u*, which unequivocally denotes entering the sphere of the Ground.

(16) Dosta ti je zagađenja u gradu? Idi u svoje selo/\*do svog sela, makar na nedelju dana. [Fed up with city pollution? Head to your village for at least a week.]

If no intention is stated explicitly, the speaker either considers it unknown or irrelevant to the interlocutor. What is implied is that the subject will return soon because the preposition *do* precludes the true teleonomic meaning, which suggests a longer stay.<sup>8</sup>

(17) Dekan je otišao do svoje kancelarije. Možete ga pričekati. [The dean has gone to his office. You can wait for him.]

However, when the Ground possesses telic qualia and relatively little time is needed to perform a typical function, *do* can also be used, as illustrated below:

(18) Vlada je otišao do pijace. [Vlada has gone to the farmer's market.]

(19) Dušan je otišao do banke. [Dušan has gone to the bank.]

The examples above are understood as excluding large-scale grocery shopping or lengthy discussions about loan conditions and relating to an activity (such as buying specific produce or withdrawing some cash) that can be completed within a limited time frame.<sup>9</sup> Metaphorically speaking, in utterances of this type, the Ground (such as the market or bank in the examples above) is conceptualized as a sphere with its primary or dominant function at the center. Consequently, the use of *do* in Examples (18) and (19) suggests that the sphere's outer surface is elastic and can be pushed inward toward the center when the activity performed at the Ground is brief. In such cases, *do* implies that the subject's metaphorical contact with the sphere of the Ground is limited to its periphery or involves minor or brief activities rather than central ones. Serbian speakers use the preposition *u* to indicate that the metaphorical surface of the sphere of the Ground has been penetrated and the subject is located at its center, or engaged in performing the primary function of the Ground.

<sup>8</sup> *Dekan je otišao do svoje kancelarije. \*Ostaće do uveče.* [The dean has gone to his office. He'll stay there until tonight.]

<sup>9</sup> The preposition *do* can also function as an attenuator when asking for permission politely, such as in *Da li mogu do toaleta?* [May I go to the toilet?]. Here, the aim is to avoid focusing on the primary function, which occurs with the use of the preposition *u*.

It should be noted that the prepositions *dok*, *za*, *u*, and *na* are not associated with typical qualia, while *do* can indicate another reason for someone or something being at a particular site, which must be stated explicitly:

(20) Vlada je otišao do pijace da pokupi zaboravljeni kačket. [Vlada has gone to the market to pick up the forgotten cap.]

(21) Vesna je otišla do banke da pozdravi prijateljicu koja se tamo zaposlila. [Vesna has gone to the bank to greet a friend who got a job there.]

The same applies to the pair of examples below. Example (22) indicates the primary function of amusement parks, while Example (23), where *do* is used, allows for another reason for visiting that does not imply a long stay.

(22) Posle škole volim da idem u luna park. Uvek se dobro zabavim. [I like to go to the amusement park after school. I always have fun there.]

(23) Učiteljica je rekla da posle škole odemo do luna parka. Tamo snimaju neku seriju, pa možemo videti poznate glumce. [The teacher said we should stop by the amusement park after school. They're filming a show there, so we can see some famous actors.]

This suggests that constructions with *do* are significantly less idiomatic<sup>10</sup> than those with prepositions *na* and *u*, as the former do not necessarily denote performing a prototypical activity. This is why Serbian requires the following:

(24) Otac je zadužen za nabavku. On svake nedelje ide na pijacu/\*do pijace. [Dad is responsible for grocery shopping. He goes to the market every week.]

(25) Koliko novca obično poneseš kad ideš na/\*do pijacu/e? [How much money do you usually take to the market?]

In Example (24), *do* is not acceptable, as grocery shopping typically involves spending some time. In Example (25), its use is also problematic, as it might suggest that the subject is only going to look at the produce rather than shop for groceries. Similarly, Example (26) implies that the subject is a student, as explicitly stated later in the sentence, while Example (27) might suggest a person who does not necessarily attend school:

(26) Jovan voli da ide u školu/\*do škole. Najbolji je đak. [Jovan likes to go to school. He's the best student.]

(27) Ona voli da ode<sup>11</sup> do obližnje škole. Razveseli se kad čuje dečiju graju. [She likes going to the nearby school. Children's voices cheer her up.]

<sup>10</sup> On idiomatization of similar constructions, see Ašić and Corblin (2014; 2016), where the focus is on *ići na more*.

<sup>11</sup> Non-referential present is often used to indicate sporadic situations, or, as in this case, the verb with a modal component indicates one's tendency to perform an action rather than a permanent characteristic.



Telicity is similarly not expressed in the next example, where the second part of the statement provides a different reason for going to the market:

(28) Volim da odem do pijace. Uživam u mirisima i bojama. [I like going to the market. I enjoy its scents and colors.]

Let us now compare the two examples below:

(29) Nela svako jutro ide u crkvu. [Nela goes to church every morning.]

(30) Nela povremeno ode do crkve. [Nela occasionally visits the church.]

Example (29) implies that the subject attends services, while the next suggests she only occasionally visits the church building. In Example (30), she may not necessarily attend the liturgy—she could be going there for personal rituals, such as lighting a candle for the living. To determine if the subject is a practicing Christian, one should ask:

(31) Idete li u crkvu? [Do you go to church?]

Attention should also be given to the following examples:

(32) Miroslav svako jutro ide u svoju banku. [Miroslav goes to his bank every morning.]

The possessive determiner in Example (32) pragmatically implies<sup>12</sup> that the subject (Miroslav) works as a clerk at the bank,<sup>13</sup> which complements the usual prototypical telic meaning.<sup>14</sup> However, when *do* is used in a similar example, the meaning will change even if the possessive determiner is retained.

(33) Miroslav svako jutro *ode* do svoje banke. [Miroslav stops by his bank every morning.]

This sentence, as confirmed is a survey,<sup>15</sup> implies that the subject goes to a particular bank—either as a client to withdraw money or as the owner to supervise business activities. It should be noted that for locations with multiple telic functions, the use of *do* refers to the principal function, which is performed routinely and quickly:

(34) Idem do benzinske pumpe. [I'm going to the petrol station.] (The sentence refers to buying petrol, whereas the preposition *na* might indicate checking a vehicle that has broken down.)

<sup>12</sup> For pragmatic implicatures, see Ашић (2014) and Moeschler & Reboul (1994).

<sup>13</sup> This might also suggest that someone has business transactions with the bank and thus visits it regularly.

<sup>14</sup> People go to the bank to conduct financial transactions, whereas Example (32) indicates that the subject is an employee of the bank.

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(35) *Idem do pošte.* [I'm going to the post office.] (i.e., to send a parcel, while *Idem u poštu* implies that the speaker does not intend to perform a typical action but plans to stay there longer, e.g., because he/she needs to discuss opening an account.)

(36) *Idem do apoteke po aspirin.* [I'm going to the chemist to get some aspirin.] (The sentence pertains to the typical telic function, i.e., obtaining medicine.)

(37) *Moj sin ima velikih problema sa ekcemom. —Idi obavezno sutra prepodne u apoteku u tržnom centru, biće prezentacija o mogućnostima lečenja ovog kožnog problema najnovijim kremama.* [My son has a serious eczema condition. —You should go to the pharmacy in the shopping center tomorrow morning, there will be a presentation of treatment options for that skin condition using the newest creams.]

In Example (37), *u* emphasizes the length of stay at the location (the Ground). However, in cases where performing the function requires more time, the preposition *do* cannot possibly refer to the typical purpose of the reference entity, be it an establishment or object.

(38) *Maca je otišla do bolnice.* [Maca has gone to the hospital.]

This sentence does not indicate that the subject is at the facility for medical treatment; instead, it should be interpreted as the person going there for another reason, such as visiting someone.

(39) *Vuk je otišao do škole.* [Vuk has gone to the school.]

Example (39) does not convey that Vuk has gone to school to attend classes but rather to swiftly perform an action, such as signing up for a trip. It should be emphasized that the expression *odlaziti do škole* [*go to the school*] can also have a spatial interpretation, where the goal is to reach the school building. The conclusion is that through grammaticalization, the prepositions *na* and *u* significantly lose the spatial dimension (when combined with nouns that possess telic qualia), while *do* tends to retain it. The next example confirms this:

(40) *Svakog jutra odem sa unukom do škole, mali je još da ide sam.* [Every morning, I take my grandson to school. He is still too young to go alone.] (Here, the speaker emphasizes their role of accompanying the child, and the idea is that they help the child reach the destination, without implying that they intend to do something at the school.)

Similarly, the sentence below implies that the sentence subject is a chemistry student:

(41) *Biljana ide na Hemijski fakultet.*<sup>16</sup> [Biljana goes to the Faculty of Chemistry.]

<sup>16</sup> Note: the sentence *Ivana danas ide na Hemijski fakultet* [*Ivana is going to the Faculty of Chemistry today*] is interpreted as spatial due to the temporal adjunct *today* and the precise identification of the faculty, implying that she is not a student.

In Example (42), the speaker conveys that Ivana has a habit of visiting a specific building because, e.g., she has friends there or enjoys observing experiments.<sup>17</sup>

(42) Biljana često ode/odlazi do Hemijskog fakulteta. [Biljana often goes to the Faculty of Chemistry.]

Let us now compare the following two sentences:

(43) Dušan je otišao na bazen. [Dušan has gone to the swimming pool.]

Example (43) implies that Dušan has gone there with the intention of swimming and engaging in other typical swimming pool activities.

(44) Dušan je otišao do bazena. [Dušan has dropped round the swimming pool.]

Example (44) excludes the usual telic interpretation,<sup>18</sup> which implies spending a relatively long period of time there. It remains to be pragmatically inferred (based on our knowledge of the world) what Dušan did at the pool if we know he only stayed there for a few moments. He could have gone to the pool to check its depth, measure the water temperature, or for similar reasons. Alternatively, if the pool refers to a sports complex, he might have gone there to meet someone. Similar considerations apply to the following examples:

(45) Dušan je otišao do plaže. [Dušan popped over to the beach.]

This sentence does not mean that the subject uses the specified place for relaxation and enjoyment (it is obvious that these would require more time). Instead, once again, the listener pragmatically infers that the subject's intention was simply to survey the situation at the beach. If, however, a specific reason exists, it must be explicitly communicated.<sup>19</sup>

(46) Dušan je otišao do plaže da snimi zalazak sunca. [Dušan popped over to the beach to take a picture of the sunset.]

Let us now focus on the difference between the following sentences:

<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that when the verb in (41) is modified by the adverb *frequently* (as in Example (42)), it suggests a habit rather than a state, thereby negating the telic interpretation of *being a student*. However, the preposition *na* suggests that the subject has a function related to the object of reference, i.e., that there is a permanent link between the Figure and the Ground.

<sup>18</sup> The typical telic interpretation of going to the pool is to go for a swim, socialize, have fun, or practice.

<sup>19</sup> For most entities there are no simple interpretations as to what one might do there during a brief period of time.

(47) Maja sutra ide do policije. [Maja is going to the police tomorrow.]

(48) Maja sutra ide u policiju. Hoće da prijavi komšije. [Maja is going to the police tomorrow. She intends to report her neighbours.]

The different meanings of the examples above are not solely due to the duration of Maja's stay at the establishment. The action of going to the police [*ići do policije*] is interpreted as establishing conventional contact with the officials, such as for renewing a personal identification document, which implies a brief visit. The other Serbian phrase [*otići u policiju*] refers to a non-standard situation where the subject visits the police to seek help due to a problem related to someone else's illegal activities. The preposition *u* denotes a different kind of a relationship, emphasizing the primary role of the police—protecting citizens from crime.

The sentence below presents another interesting case:

(49) Idem ja do mora. [I'm going to the seaside.]

This sentence is understood spatially,<sup>20</sup> implying that the subject aims to reach the boundary between a body of water and land (a beach). This information alone ensures clarity, although it often suggests an intention to, e.g., touch or step into the water. Using the preposition *na*<sup>21</sup> in this example would make the interpretation specific: the subject is going to stay at a seaside location for a vacation. Conversely, the preposition *u* would indicate that the subject intends to enter the sea to swim. The preposition *do* can also be used in some contexts to emphasize a short-term visit to the seaside rather than engaging in activities related to the destination. The spatial meaning remains primary in this case:

(50) Za vikend ćemo otići malo do mora, tek da ga omirišemo.<sup>22</sup> [We're going to the sea for the weekend, just to get a taste of it.]

Let's examine what happens in *otići na planinu* [*to go to the mountains*]<sup>23</sup>—a construction of the same semantic type—when *na* is replaced with *do*. A spatial interpretation becomes inadequate, since *do* implies contact with a physical mass, which is incorrect in this context, unlike in the construction *popeti se do vrha planine* [*to climb to the top of the mountain*]. The phrase *otići do neposredne blizine ovog geografskog entiteta* [*to go to the immediate vicinity of this geographical entity*] may imply establishing a relationship, such as observing the mountain from below. However, it is nearly impossible for this construction to suggest that the subject intends to be in the mountain area with a specific intention.

<sup>20</sup> It should be stressed once again that the preposition *do* retains its basic spatial meaning more than the prepositions *na* and *u*, as its grammaticalization is not yet complete.

<sup>21</sup> *Idem na more* is almost idiomatic, similarly to *ići na selo* (Ašić & Corblin, 2014; 2016).

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the sentence *Za vikend idemo na more* can indicate the subject's intention to take a trip to the seaside for a vacation.

(51) *Idem do planine da proverim cenu ski pasa.* [I'm going to the mountain to check the price of the ski pass.]

This is because a mountain is a vertical entity which, when used as a reference object, implies being climbed. Conversely, the preposition *do* used non-spatially signifies a (brief) stay at or in the sphere of a site that must be reached first. Example (51) does not imply that the subject will climb to the location where they can check the price of the ski pass. However, if the spatial meaning of this preposition is excluded, an acceptable sentence can be formed that includes the element of intent and suggests that the subject actually climbed to a certain altitude:

(52) *Za vikend će ekipa RTS-a otići do Zlatibora da snimi novu gondolu.*  
[During the weekend, the RTS crew will go to Zlatibor to film the new gondola.]

Finally, it should be noted that with certain Grounds, the duration associated with the activity makes a telic interpretation impossible when using the preposition *do*. Instead, the reason for a brief stay at the site must be inferred from pragmatic knowledge of the world.

(53) *Idem do bioskopa/pozorišta/muzeja.* [I'm stopping by the cinema/theater/museum.]

Example (53) usually implies that the subject is going to check the program or obtain tickets.

(54) *Idem do restorana.* [I'm going to pop over to the restaurant.] (This implies that I intend to view the interior, check the prices, or book a table.)

It should be noted that there are Grounds (or locations) where *do* can only be used to activate their telic qualia. These are entities whose function is performed through contact with their front side and which cannot contain the Figure (as is the case with *u*) or allow the Figure to move along their surface (as is the case with *na*). Consequently, in such cases, the outer boundary of the Ground remains unbreached. This demonstrates that telic interpretations are connected to spatial ones, as previously shown by Ašić and Corblin (2014; 2016).

(55) *Otišao je do bankomata/kioska/frižidera.* [He went to the ATM/news-agent's/refrigerator.]

It is logical that all three cases generally involve obtaining an entity from the reference object. For instance, with an ATM, it is clearly money. However, with the noun *frižider* [refrigerator], additional information is needed. The statement *Pera je otišao do bankomata* [Pera has gone to an ATM] provides relevant information about Pera (that he has gone to withdraw money) and answers the question *What is Pera doing?* Conversely, the telic predicate *otići do frižidera* [to go to the refrigerator] with a perfective aspect requires specification of what will be taken from the refrigerator for the sentence to be sufficiently informative:

(56) Pera je otišao do frižidera po pivo.<sup>23</sup> [Pera has gone to the refrigerator to get some beer.]

Therefore, it can be concluded that constructions with *u* and *na* always indicate a predetermined type of activity occurring within the object of reference, while constructions with *do* merely signal an intentional connection between the subject and the site, which remains unspecified. This connection can be pragmatically inferred; e.g.:

(57) Rada je otišla do prodavnice zdrave hrane. (da nešto kupi ili da pozdravi prodavačicu) [Rada has gone to the health food store. (to buy something or to greet the shopkeeper)]

However, the pragmatic inference can be canceled by saying:

(58) Rada je otišla do prodavnice zdrave hrane po zaboravljenu torbu. [Rada has gone to the health food store to get her forgotten bag.]

The same applies to the example below:

(59) Ana je otišla do crkve, ali ne da se pomoli (ateista je), već da fotografiše jednu ikonu. [Ana went to the church, not to pray (as she is an atheist), but to take a photo of an icon.]

### *Prepositions do and kod*

The starting point for the discussion of the prepositions *do* and *kod* is Milka Ivić's work on their relationship (1999), which highlights the essential difference between them with respect to the temporal limitation of situations. While *kod* implies a longer stay, *do* suggests brevity and a limited type of situation. For instance, we cannot say \**Razvela sam se od muža i otišla do roditelja* [I divorced my husband and went to my parents]; instead, we should say *Razvela sam se od muža i otišla kod roditelja* (the equivalent English sentence remains identical), as this second formulation clearly refers to a longer stay and implies that the subject intentionally returned to her parents after her divorce. For a shorter stay at a location near the subject, it is more natural to say *Otišla/Svratila/Navratila sam (časkom, malo, nakratko) do majke na kafu* [I went/dropped by/popped round (briefly, for a bit) to my mother's for a cup of coffee] (Ивић, 1999). The semantics of the verbs *svratiti* and *navratiti* [to pop over and to stop by, respectively] indicate a short stay, which is further supported by the meanings of the adverbs

<sup>23</sup> To clarify, the action *otići do frižidera* [to go to the fridge] provides a banal piece of information without specifying what is being taken from the fridge. It is not informative enough to serve as a communicative act (Ашић, 2014).

in brackets. Thus, when the aim of movement is to a person's residence (the place where they live), *kod* implies a longer stay involving socializing (Ašić & Corblin, 2014; 2016), while *do* indicates a brief visit that can be a goal in itself or serve an additional purpose. A longer stay also involves intention, but is characterized as an activity with duration, not an instantaneous action, which necessitates the use of *kod*.

(60) Danas idem kod tetke. Ne znam koliko ću ostatei. [I'm going to my aunt's today. I don't know how long I'll stay.]

(61) Idem do bake da je vidim. Nije joj dobro. [I'm going to my grandmother's to see her. She's not feeling well.]

(62) Idem do komšije po merdevine. [I'm going to the neighbour's to borrow a ladder.]

(63) Idem kod koleginice da učimo. [I'm going to a colleague's to study.]

(64) Idem kod direktora na sastanak. [I'm going to the headmaster's for a meeting.]

(65) Idem do direktora. Hoće da mi da novo zaduženje. [I'm going to see the headmaster. He wants to give me a new assignment.]

(66) Idem do nove sekretarice. Hoću da je upoznam. [I'm going to the new secretary's office. I want to meet her.]

Let's now consider what happens when sentence subjects are clients of individuals performing certain tasks. In such cases, the preposition *kod* implies a visit to a professional for treatment or examination.

(67) Užasna mi je kosa. Odoh kod frizera. [My hair is terrible. I'm going to the hairdresser's.]

(68) Nije mi dobro. Moram da odem kod doktora na detaljan pregled. [I'm not feeling well. I need to go to the doctor's for a thorough examination.]

The preposition *do* also suggests a relationship between two people, but it does not necessarily imply the use of services:

(69) Idem do frizerke da zakažem termin. [I'm going to the hairdresser to make an appointment.]

(70) Idem do doktora da mu se zahvalim. [I'm going to the doctor to thank him.]

However, telic interpretations<sup>24</sup> are still possible if it is implied that the service can be performed in a brief interval of time:

(71) Idem do frizerke da mi ošiša šiške. [I'm going to the hairdresser to have my bangs cut.]

(72) Idem do doktora po uput. [I'm going to the doctor to get a referral.]

<sup>24</sup> These are special cases, as they do not refer to a full treatment or examination.



Nevertheless, we will always say:

(73) Moram kod specijaliste da mi ispita srce i krvne sudove. [I need to go to a specialist to have my heart and blood vessels examined.]

Unlike *do, kod* implies the use of a service, as illustrated by the following pair of examples:

(74) Mrzim da idem kod zubara. Plašim se bola. [I hate going to the dentist. I'm afraid of pain.]

(75) Volim da odem do moje zubarke. Uvek se slatko ispričamo, iako izbegavam da mi pregleda zube. [I love going to my dentist. We always have a nice chat, even though I tend to avoid having my teeth examined.]

Interestingly, there are examples where *do* is used for a telic function because checking on patients implies a shorter duration:

(76) Lekarka svako jutro ode do pacijenata u vizitu.<sup>25</sup> [The doctor does rounds and sees her patients every morning.]

### *Types of Verbs Used with do for Telic Function*

The verbs *ići/otići* are commonly used to signify reaching the point where an action will be performed. In such contexts, the present tense of *ići* invariably expresses a perfective future action rather than an ongoing process, denoting the intention to reach a certain goal. Constructions with *do* that involve verbs denoting various kinds of movement typically have a spatial meaning, focusing on how the goal is reached.

(77) Šetamo se do plaže. [We're walking to the beach.]

(78) Trčim do škole. [I'm running to school.]

This is particularly evident in examples where reaching a location is presented as an effort for the subject:

(79) Jedva se odgela do kuhinje. [She barely dragged herself to the kitchen.]

The same applies to the example below:

(80) Nekako sam se dovukla do pijace. Tamo me je sačekala ćerka. [I barely managed to drag myself to the market. My daughter was waiting there.]

It should be noted that the following sentence preserves the idea of telicity due to the use of *u* and a sense of haste, indicating the intention not to be late for class.

<sup>25</sup> Note that using *kod* changes the meaning: the doctor is going to see her patients at their home.



(81) Jurim u školu. [I'm rushing to school.]

These examples confirm our initial hypothesis: when information about reaching a location is not sufficiently relevant on its own, it is inferred that it (the Ground) was reached to perform something. However, there are verbs which suggest a brief stay at a location, where the length of stay is sufficient to perform the telic function, and these are used with *do* to express telicity:

(82) Skoknuću do prodavnice. [I'll just pop round to the shop.]

(83) Trknuću do pijace. [I'll pop over to the market.]

(84) Svrtiću do pošte. [I'll stop by the post office.]

Conversely, if a service requires a longer stay, these verbs, when used with *do*, suggest the purpose of going there is something else.

(85) Svrtiću do frizerke da zakažem šišanje. [I'll stop by the hair salon to make an appointment.]

(86) Skoknuću do poslastičarnice da naručim kolače. [I'll drop by the pastry shop to order the cakes.] (Not to sit and eat them, as in *I'm going to the pastry shop.*)

(87) Svrtiću do pošte da vidim koliki je red za penziju. [I'll swing by the post office to check how long the queue is.]

However, it should be noted that in all these cases, the reason for going to the location is still related to its primary telic function.

### *Definiteness of the Noun*

The fourth factor concerns the definiteness of nouns in telic constructions. Previous research (Corblin, 1987; 2011; Ašić & Corblin, 2014; 2016) confirmed the hypothesis that the definite article is interpreted as weak in French telic constructions (*aller à<sup>26</sup> l'école, être à l'hôpital*). This interpretation arises from the functional relationship between the subject and the prepositional argument (exact identification of the location is not relevant for establishing the meaning).

This concerns semantic definiteness *in situ*, rather than pragmatic definiteness, where the referent of the noun is determined based on the pragmatic or textual context, as in the case of anaphora.<sup>27</sup> However, it should be noted that this is not the case with the generic use of the definite article (school is

<sup>26</sup> For information on the role of the preposition *à*, see Vandelois (1987).

<sup>27</sup> In Serbian, definiteness is frequently marked not only by the bare noun but also by using a demonstrative determiner (Corblin & Ašić, 2020). For example: *Upoznala sam jednog profesora iz Novog Sada. Taj profesor je vrlo neobičan.*

a state institution, hospital is the best place to get medical treatment), as the constructions still denote a specific object to which we can refer if necessary.<sup>28</sup>

The same can be shown to apply to Serbian, where the categories of definiteness and indefiniteness are nonetheless not obligatorily linguistically marked and often need to be pragmatically inferred (Stanojević, 2010; 2012). There is tangible linguistic evidence that a bare noun should be interpreted as indefinite: it can be modified by an adjective that indicates indefiniteness without changing the meaning of the sentence.<sup>29</sup>

Disregarding the semantic differences between the listed determiners, let us now observe what happens when the expression *jedan/neki* [*a, one, some*] is used with nouns in telic constructions:

(88) Dušan je u jednoj/neknoj školi. Otišao je tamo da prodaje knjige. [Dušan is at a/some school. He's gone there to sell some books.]

(89) Anđela je na jednom/nekome fakultetu. Tamo se danas održava neki rok koncert. [Anđela is at a/some faculty. There's a rock concert there today.]

(90) Lena je otišla u jedno pozorište. Ima audiciju za jednu predstavu. [Lena has gone to a/some theater. She's auditioning for a play.]

In all three cases, the indefinite determiner cancels the telic interpretation because it negates the functional definiteness of the Ground as the type of place that provides a specific service. The telic function of the Ground is canceled, and it purely denotes a physical space, which raises the question of what happens when *do* is used in such cases.

In cases where the telic interpretation is possible (due to the brevity of the time interval required for the function to be performed), the indefinite determiner indicates the already existing possibility to introduce a different aim of the subject's movement to the Ground. In other words, similarly to the prepositions *u* and *na*, the Ground is not presented as the type of place that serves only one specific function:

(91) Vlada je otišao do jedne pumpe da proveru mogu li mu tamo naduvati čamac. [Vlada went to a gas station to see if they can inflate his boat there.]

(92) Pera je otišao do jedne pijace da napravi nekoliko snimaka za svoj članak. [Pera went to a market to take some photos for his article.]

(93) Baka je otišla do jedne prodavnice da vidi da li bi tamo mogla prodavati ajvar koji pravi. [Grandma went to a store to see if she could sell them the pepper preserve she makes.]

<sup>28</sup> *Dušan est à l'école. Elle n'est pas loin d'ici.* [Dušan is at school. It is not far from here.]

<sup>29</sup> In such cases, the sentence *Treba mi kašika* [I need a spoon] means the same as *Treba mi jedna kašika* [I need one spoon]. Similarly, *Uzeću list papira* [I'll take a sheet of paper] is the same as *Uzeću jedan list papira* [I'll take one sheet of paper].

It is important to note, however, that in examples where *do* allows a telic reading, the specific location is often pragmatically determined as the closest (and therefore logical and familiar) place where the action is commonly performed. In sentences where the telic interpretation is not possible, it is usually implied that the interlocutor knows what location is being referred to. As we have seen, this is often associated with the idea of visiting a specific place or making preparations for using a certain location. Even when the sentence has a different meaning (e.g., Milka went to the hospital to visit someone), it is logical to assume that the interlocutor is familiar with the situation and knows exactly what object is being referred to.

If, however, the location is presented as indefinite, the sentence does not imply common or familiar reasons for going to that particular Ground. Instead, it suggests a specific motive and introduces a completely new referent into the discourse, rather than referring to a known entity or someone familiar to the interlocutor. The subject's presence in that location cannot be pragmatically inferred, nor is it related to any prior knowledge the interlocutor may have about it. It is presented as something unusual and, therefore, does not imply a telic function:

(94) Lela je otišla do jednog bioskopa da vidi da li tamo može da se zaposli na blagajni/\*da kupi karte.<sup>30</sup> [Lela's gone to a cinema to see if she can get a job at the box office/\*if she can buy the tickets.]

(95) Milka je otišla do jedne bolnice da proveriti da li se tamo mogu lečiti strani osiguranici/\*da primi injekciju. [Milka has gone to a hospital to check if they treat foreign insurance holders/\*to get an injection.]

Sentences with *škola* [school] and *fakultet* [faculty] as the Ground present a special case. When used with telic prepositions *na* [on, at] and *u* [in], they always denote a specific entity whose services the subject is using. When we say *Otišao je u školu* [He's gone to school], we refer to a type of Ground with a telic function that can vary depending on the situation. However, our knowledge of the world tells us that education is always pursued in a specific school or faculty.

It remains to be explained why even with the preposition *do*, which does not allow the regular (canonic) telic interpretation, *škola* and *fakultet* denote places where the subject is a student. Our assumption is that this is because even a brief stay in these institutions implies a connection with them. They are visited in order for one to attend classes or perform certain actions associated with school or university life (such as borrowing a book from a library, registering for an exam, inquiring about a section, retrieving a forgotten item, etc.) that one can only perform if one is enrolled as a student there. Therefore,

<sup>30</sup> Actually, the second scenario is possible only if the speaker knows where the subject has gone but does not consider it important to inform the hearer.

although the meaning of going there to attend classes is eliminated, the role of the subject as the beneficiary is not.<sup>31</sup>

If using the indefinite determiner *neki* [*some*] cancels functional definiteness and thus any connection between the subject and the location, a specific reason for the visit must be provided, which should not relate to the typical use of that institution.

(96) Lizon je otišla do neke škole na žurku.<sup>32</sup> [Lison has gone to a party at a school.]

Partial telic interpretation is also negated if the sentence indicates that the subject is neither a student nor a professor; however, in that case, the word *škola* [*school*] must refer to a specific entity for the information to be complete—it is important for the interlocutor to know what school is being referred to.

## Conclusion

Thanks to its dynamic spatial meaning, when the preposition *do* is combined with the verb *otići* (and other similar verbs), it denotes reaching the end point of a path without the Figure crossing the boundaries of the Ground. However, if it does not provide relevant information, this construction implies a brief stay at the Ground for a specific purpose. This usage can partially overlap with the telic interpretation of constructions using the prepositions *na*, *u*, and *kod*, but only if the activities performed in those locations do not imply duration. In other cases, the motivation for the visit can be inferred based on the expected telic interpretation; if not, it must be explicitly stated.

If the Ground (the object of reference) is not functionally or pragmatically determined, then there is always a specific reason for someone being there. This reason is unrelated to the primary function of the Ground and cannot be predicted based on existing knowledge.

We have shown that in usages with *do*, the focus is on a short, non-prototypical visit to the Ground, where the intention of the subject is not directly inferred from the telic qualia but must be inferred from specific real-world (pragmatic) conversational knowledge. Regarding definiteness, our analysis reveals that the same rules apply to *do* as to the standard telic prepositions *na* and *u*.

<sup>31</sup> In French, the expressions *passer à la banque* and *passer à l'école* are used even when referring to one's own bank or school, where one might perform a small task.

<sup>32</sup> Note that this sentence does not imply that Lison will spend a short time at a party, but rather that the school in question is not the institution where she attends classes.

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Специфичне теличке конструкције са предлогом *do* у српском

### Резиме

У овом раду тежили смо да откријемо специфичне употребе српског предлога *do* у тзв. теличким конструкцијама, које подразумевају да субјекат реченице учествује у колективној активности везаној за дато место. Такође, показали смо да, за разлику од прототипичних предлога *на*, *у* и *код*, српски предлог *do* сигнализира да (захваљујући реинтерпретацији свог просторног динамичког односа) субјекат на дато место (у сферу локализатора) стиже како би испунио одређени циљ, али и да ће његово присуство тамо бити релативно кратко. На основу тога се одређује да ли се намера може повезати са теличком интерпретацијом. Ако се намера не може повезати са овом интерпретацијом, разлози се могу контекстуално закључити или дати експлицитно.

*Кључне речи:* предлог *do*; теличке конструкције; просторни однос; локализатор; прагматика.



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