

Clause Mates Matter

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Introduction: In this talk, we investigate multiple sluicing and multiple *wh*-questions in Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian (BCMS). ① Based on novel data, we argue that the Clause-Mate Condition (CMC) is operative in the case of multiple sluicing in BCMS, contra previous influential claims (Lasnik 2014). ② We explore the CMC-related locality restrictions on multiple *wh*-questions and show that the *wh*-phrases must also originate from the same clause.

Background: According to the CMC, the correlates of the sluiced *wh*-phrases must be in the same (finite) clause; if they are separated by a clause boundary, multiple sluicing is disallowed, (1) (Takahashi 1994, Nishigauchi 1998, Merchant 2001, Lasnik 2014, Barros & Frank 2023, Abels & Dayal 2023, Cortés Rodríguez & Griffiths 2024a,b, a.o.). (For better visualization of the data, we use subscripts matching the *wh*-phrase (boldfaced) with its correlate (underlined).)

(1) *_{[CP} Every teacher₁ reported [_{CP} that Harriet spoke with some student₂]], but I don't know **which teacher**₁ **with which student**₂. (Cortés Rodríguez & Griffiths 2024a)

CMC has been shown to be a robust constraint cross-linguistically, with very few languages brought up as potential counterexamples to it, notably, BCMS, Romanian, Indonesian, Bangla, and Kashmiri (see the discussion in Abels & Dayal 2023 as to whether these are real exceptions). The claim that BCMS allows CMC-violations comes from Lasnik (2014), who provides the example in (2). Lasnik further reports that the same speakers who accept (2) also accept multiple *wh*-movement targeting two different clauses, as in (3). This correlation is reported to hold for six speakers, with two of them finding (2) hard to parse; one speaker rejects both (2) and (3).

(2) Neko₁ misli da je Ivan nešto₂ pojeo. ?Pitam se **ko**₁ **šta**₂.
sb.NOM thinks that AUX Ivan smth.ACC eat.PTCP ask self who.NOM what.ACC
'Someone thinks that Ivan ate something. I wonder who what.' (Lasnik 2014)

(3) **Ko**₁ **šta**₂ t₁ misli da je Petar pojeo t₂?
who.NOM what.ACC thinks that AUX Petar eat.PTCP
'Who thinks that Petar ate what?' (Lasnik 2014)

However, there are at least two possible confounds in the data reported for the speakers who accept both (2) and (3). First, in both examples, *wh*₂ could potentially be understood as the internal argument of the matrix verb *misli* 'think' (with the DO of the embedded verb being null). Second, as argued by Abels & Dayal (2023), genuine CMC-violations only have a Pair-List reading since Single-Pair interpretations are compatible with (asyndetic) coordination of two single sluices (in the case of (2) this would be 'Who ~~thinks Ivan ate something~~ and what does s/he think Ivan ate?'). The multiple sluicing example in (2), however, does not control for the Single-Pair/Pair-List distinction; in fact, correlate₁ in (2) is *neko* 'someone', which has been argued to enforce a Single-Pair reading (cf. Vicente 2018).

New empirical findings & discussion: We constructed examples, controlling for (i) the initial position of *wh*₂, which can only be an argument of the embedded verb, (ii) Pair-List readings, by adding an adverbial quantifier distributing over the indefinite correlates, (iii) Superiority, i.e., *wh*₁ preceding *wh*₂, (iv) the grammatical roles of the *wh*-phrases (Subj, DO, IO). 11 native speakers of different varieties of BCMS (all linguists) provided judgments on a 5-point Likert scale (1 unacceptable, 5 acceptable). Our findings show that ① the CMC must be obeyed in multiple sluicing, (4); ② the *wh*-phrases in multiple *wh*-questions cannot originate in two different clauses, (5). (The average scores are given below; none of the speakers judged these examples

with more than 2.) Based on this, we conclude that multiple *wh*-questions and multiple sluicing pattern alike, and crucially, they both show the same locality restrictions, *pace* Lasnik (2014).

- (4) U svakoj kancelariji šef je nekome₁ govorio da je Jovan prevario nekoga₂.
 in every office boss AUX sb.DAT tell.PTCP that AUX Jovan deceive.PTCP sb.ACC

*Pitam se kome₁ koga₂.
 ask self who.DAT who.ACC

Intended: ‘In every office the boss told someone that Jovan deceived someone. I’m wondering to whom whom.’ [Average score: 1.5]

- (5) *Kome₁ je koga₂ Ivan objašnjavao t₁ da je Marija izljubila t₂?
 who.DAT AUX who.ACC Ivan explain.PTCP that AUX Marija kiss.PTCP

Intended: ‘To whom did Ivan explain whom Marija kissed?’ [Average score: 1.3]

We also tested Lasnik’s (2014) examples, (2) and (3). They received slightly higher average scores, 1.7 and 2.4, respectively, with the judgments of individual speakers being more dispersed. Moreover, counter to what Lasnik reports, some speakers judged the *wh*-phrases originating from two different clauses to be more acceptable in multiple sluicing than in multiple *wh*-questions and others the opposite. We take this to indicate that these examples possibly have the above-mentioned confounds.

Since multiple sluicing is expected to be parallel to multiple *wh*-questions, we further explored the locality conditions of multiple *wh*-questions. First, it is important to note that multiple *wh*-questions are acceptable when the two *wh*-phrases originate either from the matrix clause or from the same embedded clause (not illustrated for reasons of space). The latter option has been reported to be possible only for some speakers (Rudin 1988, see also Bošković 1998 *et seq*); this was confirmed by our speakers as well. This suggests that the unacceptability of (5) is related to the extraction site of the *wh*-phrases.

Second, to further corroborate our claims regarding the CMC-related locality conditions in multiple *wh*-questions, we also tested sentences where the two *wh*-phrases originate from two different *embedded* clauses. This is judged as ungrammatical, as shown in (6).

- (6) *Ko₁ je koga₂ Petar pročitao da je t₁ tvrdio da je Maša videla
 who.NOM AUX who.ACC Peter read.PTCP that AUX claim.PTCP that AUX Maša see.PTCP
 t₂ u gradu?
 in town

Intended: ‘Who did Peter read claimed that Masha saw whom in town?’ [Av.: 1]

Comorovski (1986: 175, ex. 10) has claimed that this kind of long-distance multiple *wh*-movement is licit in Romanian, which is another CMC-violating language according to the literature. Notably, though, in the Romanian example discussed, *wh*₂ can be understood as the internal argument of the matrix verb, i.e., the potential confound mentioned above might be at play.

Theoretical relevance: BCMS has been influentially cited as a counterexample to the CMC. Thus, pointing out the confounds in the previously reported BCMS data that this claim has rested on and providing carefully constructed examples contradicting the previous findings has theoretical repercussions in itself. Moreover, current accounts of the CMC, e.g., Abels & Dayal (2023), argue that the CMC is due to locality restrictions on *covert* movement. The new findings on BCMS, a multiple *wh*-fronting language, show that CMC-related locality restrictions are observed in both multiple sluicing and multiple *wh*-questions. This in turn suggests that the CMC should be extended to movement in general, both covert and overt.

Selected references: Abels, K. & Dayal, V. 2023. On the syntax of multiple sluicing and what it tells us about *wh*-scope taking. *LI* • Bošković, Ž. 1998. *Wh*-phrases and *wh*-movement in Slavic.

Position paper. • Cortés Rodríguez, A. & Griffiths, J. 2024a. An experimental investigation of the Clausemate Condition in German multiple sluicing, *Proceedings of WCCFL 40* • Lasnik, H. 2014. Multiple sluicing in English? *Syntax* • Rudin, C. 1988. On multiple questions and multiple wh-fronting. *NLLT*