

HODNOCENÍ PŘEDNÁŠKY PRO ODBORNOU VEŘEJNOST

Masarykova univerzita	
Fakulta	filozofická
Obor řízení	obecná a diachronní lingvistika
Uchazeč	doc. PhDr. Mojmír Dočekal, Ph.D.
Datum přednášky	19.03.2026
Téma přednášky	Logical Inferences and Grammaticality: An Experimental Perspective
Přítomno posluchačů (počet)	20 + 5 online
Pověření hodnotitelé (členové komise)	prof. RNDr. Václav Blažek, CSc. Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hana Filip Prof. Franc Lanko Marušič

The talk presented original experimental evidence on whether Negative Polarity Item (NPI) licensing and monotonicity-based inference reflect a single underlying competence or dissociate. After situating the problem within the modularity debate — from structuralist levels-of-analysis to Chomsky's autonomy-of-syntax thesis and Fodor's modularity of mind — the speaker introduced the classical Ladusaw–von Stechow downward-entailment (DE) theory and its core prediction that DE environments should facilitate downward inferences. Three prior studies were reviewed: Szabolcsi et al. (2008) found no correlation; Chemla et al. (2011) found a modest one (Kendall's $\tau \approx 0.28$); and Denić et al. (2021) found small effects only in ambiguous environments. Crucially, no prior study had manipulated structural locality directly.

The core contribution was a two-experiment design exploiting Double Licensing (DL) environments and Homer's (2021) local polarity domains. Experiment 1 tested acceptability of the NPI *sebelepší* across three conditions varying negation position (BASELINE, DOUBT-NEG, NEG-DOUBT); Experiment 2 elicited inference judgments in a 2x2 design crossing local monotonicity (DE vs. UE) with inference direction (upward vs. downward). Both tasks were administered via L-Rex to 70 native Czech speakers, of whom 57 passed the filler items and were included in the analysis. Bayesian regression models revealed a striking dissociation: licensing was strongly sensitive to negation position ($BF > 1015$), whereas inference judgments were not ($BF \approx 0.044$, i.e. 22.7:1 evidence for the null). The speaker argued that this dissociation — reinforced by an appendix experiment showing intermediate NPI acceptability under the non-monotonic *většina* ('most') — strongly supports Barker's (2018) scope theory: NPIs mark narrow scope in the local domain and are therefore unreliable cues to global monotonicity direction.

The talk has several notable strengths. The DL design is genuinely novel: separating local from global monotonicity through matched licensing and inference tasks makes the dissociation maximally transparent. The Bayesian framework is used to its full potential — obtaining direct evidence for the null is precisely the right approach here, and the effect sizes are striking. The theoretical arc from modularity through the DE–scope contrast to Barker

(2018) and Homer (2021) is well-constructed and persuasive, and the většina appendix usefully extends the empirical base to a context where the two theories make opposite predictions. The one question worth pursuing further — whether NPIs in the local domain themselves shift inference judgments — is already acknowledged and under investigation, making it a natural and welcome next step rather than a gap.

Závěr

Přednáška doc. PhDr. Mojmíra Dočekala, Ph.D., Logical Inferences and Grammaticality: An Experimental Perspective přednesená v rámci řízení ke jmenování profesorem, **prokázala** dostatečnou vědeckou kvalifikaci a pedagogickou způsobilost uchazeče, standardně požadovanou v rámci řízení ke jmenování profesorem v oboru obecná a diachronní lingvistika.

Brno dne 20.3. 2026

Václav Blažek

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