Subjunctive-infinitive competition in Balkan Slavic languages

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1. Introduction: Infinitive loss in Balkan languages

Subject of the talk: Infinitive loss in Balkan languages as an aspect of the broader cross-linguistic grammatical phenomenon of subjunctive-infinitive competition.[1]

One of the most striking morpho-syntactic features of Balkan sprachbund is the loss of infinitive complementation and its replacement with finite complementation (Joseph 1970, Krapova 1998, Roussou 2009 etc.). Note the contrast between non-Balkan languages in (1) and Balkan languages in (2):

(1) a. *Jean peut* ***conduire***.   (French)   b. Maria debe **venir**.   (Spanish)
    J.   can3.sg. drive-INF   M.   must3.sg. come-INF
    'Jean can drive.'   'Maria must come.'

   c. *On načal* ***izučat'*** *pravo*. (Russian)   d. Umie **pływać**.   (Polish)
    he began study-INF law   can3.sg. swim-INF
    'He began to study law.'   'S/he can swim.'

(2) a. *O Kostas bori   na   **odhiji***. (Greek)   b. *Ivan trjabva da   **dojde**.*   (Bulgarian)
    the Kostas can3.sg. that drive3.sg.   I.   must3.sg. that come3.sg.
    'Kostas can drive.'   'Ivan must come.'
    (Roussou, 2009: 1815)

   c. *Maria përpiqet të* ***shkruajë***. (Albanian)   d. *Ion a   reusit   sa   **vina.*** (Romanian)
    M.   try3.sg. that write3.sg.   I. have3.sg. managed that come3.sg.
    'Maria is trying to write.'   'Ion managed to come.'

   e. *Počna   da   **studira**   pravo.* (Macedonian) f. *Zna   da   **pliva**.*   (Serbian)
    began3.sg. that study3.sg. law   know3.sg. that swim3.sg.
    'S/he began to study law.'   'S/he knows how to swim.'

Finite control complements in (2) are specific to Balkan languages, as shown by the contrast between Balkan (3) and non-Balkan Slavic (4) in this context:

(3) a. *Ivan trjabva da* ***dojde.*** (Bg)   b. *Počna   da   **studira**   pravo.*   (Mac)
    I.   must3.sg. that come3.sg.   began3.sg. that study3.sg. law

(4) c. *Jan musi* ***przyjść.***   (Pol)   d. *On načal* ***izučat'*** *pravo*.   (Rus)
    J. must3.sg. come-INF   he began study-INF law

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[1] Subjunctive-infinitive competition was already noted as a phenomenon by authors like Bouchard (1984) or Farkas (1992). Here I will provide a new formal analysis that accounts for this phenomenon across languages.

A similar contrast is observed between different varieties of Serbo-Croatian:

(5) a. *On mora   doći.*   a'. ??*On mora   da   dođe.*   (Standard Croatian)
    he must3.sg. come-INF   he must3.sg. that come3.sg.
  b. *On zna   plivati.*   b'. ?? *On   zna   da   pliva.*
    he know3.sg. swim-INF   he know3.sg. that swim3.sg.

(6) a. *On mora   doći.*   a'. *On mora   da   dođe.*   (Standard Serbian)
    he must3.sg. come-INF   he must3.sg. that come3.sg.
  b. *On zna   plivati.*   b'. *On   zna   da   pliva.*
    he know3.sg. swim-INF   he know3.sg. that swim3.sg.

(7) a. ?**On mora   doći.*   a'. *On mora   da   dođe.*   (Torlak Serbian)
    he must3.sg. come-INF   he must3.sg. that come3.sg.
  b. ?**On zna   plivati.*   b'. *On   zna   da   pliva.*
    he know3.sg. swim-INF   he know3.sg. that swim3.sg.

If we look at the earlier variants of Balkan languages that have (almost) completely lost their infinitive today, such as Bulgarian and Macedonian, we can observe that they used to feature this grammatical category before:

(8) a. *Ne priidoxъ **služiti.***   (Middle Bg, 14th c.)
    not came1.sg. serve-INF
    'I did not come to serve.'
    (*Trojanska priča*, Mirčev 1978, cit. in Joseph 1983)

  b. *Člka dva vъnidosta vъ crkve **pomoliti** sę.*   (Old Mac, 12th c.)
    men two entered in church pray-INF refl.
    'Two men entered the church to pray.'
    (*Macedonian gospels*, Koneski 1966, cit. in Joseph 1983)

2. Balkan infinitive loss and the subjunctive-infinitive competition

Indicative vs subjunctive mood can be marked in different ways cross-linguistically: in Western Romance languages (among others), subjunctives and infinitives are distinguished through verbal morphology; in Balkan languages, they are distinguished through mood markers (often referred to as mood particles) situated on the left periphery of the embedded clause (Giannakidou, 1998; Philippaki-Warburton, 1985; Rivero, 1994; Terzi, 1992 etc.).[2] Nevertheless, Balkan subjunctives share a number of common underlying properties with their Romance (and other) counterparts. For instance, they are selected by the same types of (irrealis/non-veridical) predicates in embedded environments:

(9) a. *Je crois qu'il **vient** demain.*   b. *Je veux qu'il **vienne** demain.*   (Fr)
    I think that he comes-IND tomorrow   I want that he comes-SUBJ tomorrow
  c. *Pienso   que **viene**   mañana.*   d. *Prefiero que **venga** mañana.*   (Sp)
    think1.sg. that come3.sg.-IND tomorrow   prefer1.sg. that come3.sg.-SUBJ tomorrow
    'I believe/think that he is coming tomorrow.' 'I want/prefer him to come tomorrow.'

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[2] Serbian is a bit more complicated because it introduces both indicatives and subjunctives through the item *da*. Nevertheless, as shown in Sočanac (2011, 2017) or Todorović (2012), among others, indicative *da* and subjunctive *da* constitute two separate syntactic items, with distinct formal and functional properties.

(10) a. *Znam* ***če*** *ništo ne znam.*   b. *Iskam **da** dojdeš dnes.*   (Bg)
       know1.sg. that-IND nothing not know1.sg.   want1.sg. SUBJ come2.sg. today
     c. *Znam* ***deka*** *ništo ne znam.*   d. *Pretpočitam **da** dojdeš denes.*   (Mac)
       know1.sg. that-IND nothing not know1.sg.   prefer1.sg. SUBJ come2.sg. today
       'I know that I don't know anything.'   'I want/prefer you to come today.'

Balkan subjunctive mood particles exhibit similar distributional and functional properties as Romance subjunctive verbs in matrix clausal environments as well (among others), typically denoting directive/imperative meanings, as in (11), or optative/hortative meanings, as in (12)

(11) a. *Qu'il vienne tout de suite!*   (Fr)   b. *Ivan da dojde vednaga pri men!* (Bg)
       that he comesSUBJ right away   I. SUBJ come3.sg. immediately to me
       'Let him come right away.'   'Ivan should immediately come to me.'
                                                   (Laskova 2012: 388)

(12) a. *Que vivas cien años!* (Sp)   b. *Da ste svi živi i zdravi!*   (Srb)
       that live2.sg.SUBJ hundred years   SUBJ be2.pl. all alive and healthy
       'May you live a hundred years.'   'May you all be alive and well.'

Balkan Slavic *da*-complements (and their equivalents in other Balkan languages) should thus be analyzed as subjunctives. The loss of infinitives in Balkan languages can then be seen as part of the broader cross-linguistic phenomenon of subjunctive-infinitive competition.

Subjunctive-infinitive competition can have two basic manifestations across languages:

     (i)   *Replacement of one category with the other*: subjunctive overtaking the infinitive, as in Balkan, or vice versa, as in English.

     (ii)   *Complementary distribution*: in those languages that still feature both infinitives and subjunctives (e.g. Western Romance; Northern Slavic), the two categories compete for the same types of syntactic environments (e.g. embedded clauses selected by the same predicate), with the infinitive restricted to control readings (13a-14a) and subjunctive to non-control readings (13b-14b) (Everaert 1985, Farkas 1992, Manzini 2000 etc.).

         (13)   a. *Je veux venir. / * Je veux que je vienne.*   (Fr)
               I want come-INF I want that I come-SUBJ1.sg.
             b. *Je veux que tu viennes. / * Je veux toi venir.*
               I want that you comeSUBJ2.sg.   I want you come-INF

         (14)   a. *Ja hoču ujti. / * Ja hoču čtoby ja ušel.*   (Rus)
               I want leave-INF   I want SUBJ I leave
             b. *Ja hoču, čtoby ty ušel. / * Ja hoču ty ujti.*
               I want SUBJ you leave   I want you leave-INF

3. Formal analysis: Propositional vs non-propositional CP complement selection

Indicative complements (selected by predicates like *say, claim, argue, think, believe, know* etc.) are propositional, i.e. they can be judged as true or false. Subjunctive and infinitive complements (selected by verbs such as *want, prefer, order, must, can* etc.) are non-propositional, i.e. they cannot receive a truth value.

From a syntactic perspective, these two types of complements are selected under two different CP-type projections, which occupy different positions within the left-periphery clause structure:

(i)   Indicative/propositional CP is situated in the highest structural position within the clausal spine (corresponding to ForceP from Rizzi 1997; reanalyzed as Speaker Deixis in Haegeman 2006)

[ForceP….[TP [vP]]]

(ii)   Non-propositional (subjunctive/infinitive CP)

[~~ForceP~~…FinP [TP [vP]]]

Propositional-type complements in (i) introduce a greater clausal barrier in the context of matrix-embedded syntactic dependencies than is the case with non-propositional complements in (ii). As a result, complements in (i) tend to bring about stronger island effects than those in (ii) (15). Moreover, complements in (ii) exhibit more local type of NPI binding (16) and more anaphoric tense properties (17) than those in (i), among other syntactic contrasts.

(15)   a.   *   *Ktoi ty dumaeš čto   vypil vsjo pivo?*   (Rus)
                 who you think that-IND drank all beer
                 'Who do you think drank all the beer?'
          b.   *Ktoi ty hočeš čtoby   ti napisal stat'ju?*
                 who you want that-SUBJ you-dat. write paper
                 'Who do you want to write you a paper?'
                 (Antonenko, 2008: 10)

(16)   a.   *Nisam   rekao da sam vidio ikoga.*   (Srb)
                 not-be1.sg. said that be1.sg. saw anyone
                 'I did not say that I saw anyone.'
          b.   *Ne želim   da   vidim nikoga.*
                 not want1.sg. SUBJ see1.sg. nobody
                 'I do not wish to see anybody.'

(17)   a.   *Mislja,   če   si trŭgna / si trŭgva / šte si trŭgne.*   (Bg)
                 think1.sg. that-IND   left3.sg. / is-leaving / will leave3.sg.
                 'I think that s/he left/is leaving/ will leave.'
          b.   *Iskam   da   * si trŭgna / * si trŭgva / si trŭgne.*
                 Want1.sg. SUBJ   left.3.sg. / is-leaving / leave3.sg.

4. Balkan subjunctives and the issue of language ideology

Eurocentric bias: infinitives seen in more favorable light (European; Western) than subjunctives (Balkan, non-Western).

- The lack of infinitive in Greek was referred to as an imperfection/defficiency of the Greek language by a 19th century Austrian scholar Jakob Fallmerayer

- Efforts in Albania to reintroduce the infinitive, still present in the Gheg dialect, into standard Albanian (based on the Tosk dialect where the infinitive was lost) (cf. Morgan 2015)

- Stigmatization of subjunctives as a Balkan feature in Croatian; efforts to differentiate Croatian from Serbian by only using the infinitive in control contexts

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