

Diachrony of subjunctive-infinitive competition in Balkan Slavic: Typological vs sprachbund developments

One of the central questions in Balkan linguistics has been to determine which aspects of grammatical convergence between languages in the region can be considered as genuine sprachbund innovations, and which are due to broader cross-linguistic processes (Friedman & Joseph 2024). The paper addresses this question in relation to infinitive (Inf) loss and its replacement with finite subjunctives (Subj), one of the most widely studied aspects of Balkan sprachbund (Joseph 1983). Inf loss in Balkan Slavic will be analyzed as part of a broader typological phenomenon of subjunctive-infinitive competition (SIC). In effect, the retreat of Inf in favor of Subj in certain syntactic environments has been observed in a wide range of languages outside of the Balkans as well (note the shift from Latin *accusativus cum infinitivo* to the modern-Romance Subj in non-control complements in [1-2]), and can be seen as part of a broader typological shift from paratactic to hypotactic structures. Hence the importance of distinguishing between the more general typological processes and the more specific sprachbund developments in the context of Balkan infinitive loss.

The paper studies the diachronic developments related to SIC in Balkan Slavic (BlkS), ranging from Old Church Slavonic (OCS) to modern Bulgarian (Bg), Macedonian (Mk) and Serbian (Sr), with two main objectives: (i) identify those syntactic environments where Subj-Inf replacement can be considered a genuine Balkanism; (ii) determine which underlying formal development led to the Balkan-sprachbund innovations pertaining to SIC. The earliest observed instances of SIC and subsequent Subj-Inf replacement in OCS took place in adjunct (mainly purposive or resultative) clauses (3) and complement clauses embedded under directive predicates (usually involving object control) (4), as evidenced by data from early OCS textual sources (Mirčev 1978, Lunt 2001). However, these cannot be considered as specifically Balkan-sprachbund phenomena because such environments exhibit SIC on a broader cross-linguistic basis as well (Farkas 1992, Socanac 2017 etc).

The instances of Subj-Inf replacement that constitute genuine sprachbund innovations in BlkS are those that took place in anaphoric clauses, involving obligatory (usually subject) control. As shown in (5), modern Balkan Slavic languages like Bg or Mk only employ Subj complements in such contexts, whereas their earlier historical variants still tended to use Inf there. These are not the types of contexts where we observe SIC cross-linguistically because most non-Balkan languages would employ Inf or other non-finite complements in (5). Thus we are dealing with a more specific Balkan-sprachbund development in this context.

Control complements such as those in (5) are analyzed here as truncated, mono-clausal structures lacking an embedded CP layer, as evidenced by a range of matrix-embedded locality phenomena that they exhibit and that will be discussed in the paper as well. This is where the formal part of the analysis comes into play. I claim that Subj-Inf replacement took place in the environments such as those in (5) thanks to a diachronic development that affected the syntactic status of the BlkS subjunctive marker *da*. The latter was reanalyzed from a high left-periphery C-item to a mood particle merged under a Pol(arity) head situated lower down in the clause structure. This, in turn, allowed the Subj marker to be used in control structures lacking a CP, ultimately leading to Subj-Inf replacement.

The higher initial positioning of the item *da* is evidenced by the OCS data exemplified in (6), which show *da* being separated from the lower verb (in bold) by left-dislocated syntactic constituents (underlined) (Lunt 2001: 161). The syntactic configuration in (6) is no longer possible in present-day BlkS (hence the ungrammaticality in [7]), because the subjunctive marker is syntactically contiguous to the lower verb- a widely observed pan-Balkan feature (Krapova 2001, Roussou 2009 etc.) I argue that this is another surface manifestation of the reanalysis of the formal status of the item *da* outlined above, i.e. its shift from a high C-item to a low Pol-item. The paper also discusses some additional diachronic factors that further spurred BlkS Inf loss in conjunction with the change in the formal status of Subj marker *da*, such as the weakening of the phonological endings in Inf, or the broader socio-linguistic context of multilingualism that may have favored the use of Subj over Inf as a more efficient communicative strategy, for reasons that are explained in more detail in the paper.

- (1) *Volo te venire.* (Lat)
 want.1.sg. you-acc. come.INF
 ‘I want you to come.’
- (2) a. *Je veux que tu viennes / * tu venir.* (Fr)
 I want that you come.2.sg.SUBJ you come.INF
- b. *Quiero que tu vengas / * tu venir.* (Sp)
 want.1.sg that you come.2sg.SUBJ you come.INF
- (3) a. *ispl̃nišę sa d̃ñbe roditi ej* (Codex Zographensis)
 fulfilled refl. days give-birthINF she-dat.
- b. *ispl̃nišę sa d̃ñije da rodit̃* (Codex Assemanius)
 fulfilled refl. days SUBJ give-birth.3.sg
 (Mirčev 1978:233, cit. in Cinque & Krapova 2019)
- (4) *moljaax̃q i da ne poṽelit̃ im̃ ṽ bezd̃no it̃i.*
 begged.3.pl he-dat. SUBJ not tell they-dat. in abyss go.INF
 (Lunt 2001: 161)
- (5) a. *poče se pisat̃ meseca marta* (Mk, 16th c.) (vs. ‘*da se pišuva*’ in modern Mk)
 began refl.write.INF month march-gen. SUBJ write.3.sg
- b. *čto ti mogot dati* (Old Bg) (vs. ‘*da ti datat*’ in modern Bg)
 what you-dat. can.3.sg.give.INF SUBJ give.3.sg.
 (cit. in Cinque&Krapova 2019)
- (6) a. *priñešę ... d̃eti da roč̃ę ṽzložit̃ na ñje*
 brought.3.pl children SUBJ hands put.3.sg. on them
- b. *ñešm̃ bo dostoiñ da pod̃ kroṽ moi ṽnideši*
 not-be.1.sg. worthy SUBJ under roof mine enter.2.sg.
- (7) * *Iskam da Ivan otide.* (Bg)
 want1.sg. SUBJ I. leave3.sg.
 ‘I want Ivan to leave.’

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