Morphological Innovation and Semantic Shift in Macedonian*

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In the discussion of features characterizing the Balkan linguistic league, and in the description of individual Balkan languages and dialects, it is generally assumed that the presence of a given form signals the presence of an expected corresponding meaning. Thus, dialectological studies have always concentrated on phonology, morphology, and lexiconology but have given little or no place to syntax and semantics. Stojkovic's (1975) dialectological atlas is typical in this regard: out of 314 features, 153 are phonological, 69 are morphological, 86 are lexical (e.g., nazvanja na sofa 'names for table'). 3 are syntactic, and 3 are semantic in that they concern different meanings assigned to the same lexical item (e.g., muršen 'dirty' vs 'greasy', jut 'hot' vs 'sour', čet 'frequent' vs 'thick'). I intend to show here that semantic isoglosses pertaining to grammatical categories can differ from the morphological isoglosses with which they are generally associated and are thus worthy of separate study and greater attention. Such a study can also shed light on the historical processes that resulted in the current situation. In order to illustrate this point, I will examine expressions in southwest Macedonian dialects of the grammatical category that I have called status (cf. Friedmann 1981; also known as evidentiality, reported mood, etc.), but which by any other name still involves the speaker's attitude toward the reliability of the information being conveyed). While status is not a Classic Balkan feature, it can be called a Balkan Cluster Phenomenon (cf. Hamp 1979), embracing as it does Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Turkish with "resonances" in Romanian (the so-called presumptive mood [Graub 1966: 216, et passim]) and perhaps the Greek exclusion of perjects from nonvolitional clauses (Joseph Penteroudaskis cited in Friedmann 1977: 126-27).

In order to clarify the relationship of the synchronic situation to its diachronic development, I will begin with the relevant portion of the Old Church Slavonic verbal system, which can be taken as representing the stage of Common Slavic from which the current Macedonian developments originated. In terms of the development of status oppositions, the OCS preterite system can be divided into three sets of forms (series): 1) the simple preterite, comprising the aorist and imperfect, 2) the perfect, composed of the present auxiliary 'be' and the resultative participle in -l (hereafter the "I-form"), which was based on the aorist stem, and 3) the pluperfect, based on the I-form with the imperfective aorist or imperfect auxiliary 'be'. For the purposes of this discussion, the standard characterizations of these series can be accepted: the simple preterite is a (definite) past, the perfect is a present resultative past, and the pluperfect is a past resultative past (Lunt 1974: 98, 137).

The modern Macedonian dialectal systems can be characterized by the following four types of innovation in the preterite system described above:

1) Auxiliary loss in the old perfect (already attested in Suprasliens; Lunt 1974: 98)
2) The development of an I-form based on the imperfect stem (apparently not before the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries; Dejanova 1969: 20)
3) The use of the perfect of 'be' (bil, etc.) as an auxiliary with the I-form (attested in the thirteenth century for Serbian and fifteenth for Bulgarian; Belić 1969: 83, Dejanova 1970: 28)
4) The rise of a new perfect series using various forms of ima 'have' and the verbal adjective/past passive participle (attested in the seventeenth century; Konjeski 1965: 171).

On the basis of these innovations, the following synchronic morphological isoglosses can be distinguished:

1. Complete absence of the third person auxiliary in the descendants of the old perfect (west of Skopje - Veles - Ostrov - Kajlar; Vidoseki 1962/63: 93)
2. Presence of an imperfect I-form (west of an isogloss running southeast from Kumanovo into Aegean Macedonia, where it meanders eastward north of Valošije, east of Serez, northwest of Ziljahovo, and north of Drama; Ivanov 1972: 126)
3. Use of bil as an auxiliary (east of Delčevo, Kukuš, Solun; Vidoseki 1962/63: 97)
4. Use of perfect constructions in ima, etc. (Konjeski, Vidoseki, and Jašar-Nasteva 1966: 521-22, 524-35):
   A. present perfect ima dojdeno (west of Gostivar - Vardar - Gevgelija - Kukuš - Strumski/sporadic to Tetovo - Kriva Palanka - Serez)
   B. pluperfect imaše dojdeno (same as above without sporadic spread)
   C. I-form imal dojdeno (Gostivar - Lerin - Vardar)

For semantic isoglosses distinguishing types of status, the following gradations can be distinguished:

I. Marked Non-Reported: Incompatible with verbs reporting, e.g.:
   (1) *Risto tvrdi deka Kočo ja imaše svršeno rabotata.
      'Risto claims that Kočo finished the job.' (cf. Friedmann 1977: 110)
II. Marked Confirmative: Incompatible with felicitous verbs of doubt but acceptable for information of which the speaker is certain regardless of the source, e.g.:
   (2) Ne vernam deka tie go napraviša toa.
   *I don't believe they did it' but 'I can believe they did it [despite the fact that I know they did].' (cf. Friedmann 1977: 43)

* It is important to stress the fact that the Macedonian example sentence is not grammatical in and of itself. What is ungrammatical is a felicitous (literal) reading of the sen...
3) No podocna se slučija rabotii za koi ne znaeuv.
   'But after that things happened which I didn't know about.' (ibid.: 15)
4) Reče deka beše vo Ohrid.
   'He said he was in Ohrid.' (ibid.: 74-75)

III. Unmarked (Nonconfirmative): Compatible with any type of status meaning, e.g.
   A. Perfect/Simple past:
      (5) Dosta sme rabotele.
          'We have worked enough.' (ibid.: 157)
      (6) Tatko mi bil mnogu meraklijka za cveka.
          'My father used to be very fond of flowers.' (ibid.: 54)
B. Reported:
   (7) Čovekov bil od Amerika.
       'This man [said he] is/was from America.' (ibid.: 71)
C. Admiring-Dubitative:
   (8) Ti si bil Rom! Ne sum znal!
       'Oh, you're a Gypsy! I didn't know.' (ibid.: 78)
   (9) - Toj poveve od tebe znal za boksiranje.
       - Toj poveve znal!
       - He knows more about boxing than you do. - He knows more, indeed!
       (ibid.)
IV. Marked Nonconfirmative: Incompatible with verbs of confirmed perception, e.g.,
   (10) *Jas vidov kako toj go imal napraveno toa.
       'He saw how/that he had done it.' (ibid.: 110)
   (11) Mislam deka toj go imal napraveno toa.
       'I think he did it.' (ibid.: 188)
   (12) Što znam, možebe sum go imal storeno.
       'Who knows, maybe I have done it.' (ibid.: 111)

The dialect region bounded roughly by Prilep, Veles, and Kičevo, which in this respect as in many others provides the basis of Literary Macedonian, is included within the boundaries of morphological isoglosses 1, 2, and 4(a-c) but not 3. Likewise, all the semantic status distinctions just described are present. The simple preterite is marked for confirmative status (II) and the old perfect has become the unmarked (nonconfirmative) past (III a-c). The old pluperfect and the new perfect in ima do not enter into status oppositions, but the new pluperfects in imaše and imal do: The former is marked nonreported (I) while the latter is marked nonconfirmative (IV). In terms of the historical processes that lead to these developments, it would appear that the shift of meaning from 'definite' to 'confirmative' in the simple preterite and from resultantive to unmarked (nonconfirmative) in the old perfect had already begun at an early date, as hints of it are found in the oldest Slavic pačerikon (Wiż 1933). The significantly later rise of the new perfect series in ima,

tence, and it is this fact which is basic to establishing 'confirmative' as the basic meaning of the simple preterite. I stress this fact here because some scholars have missed this essential point.

e etc. is reflected in the fact that the newer confirmative/nonconfirmative distinction, which is realized privatively in the older, less marked forms, is realized equi-

With this background of Old Church Slavonic and Literary Macedonian (= Prilep - Veles - Kičevo) in view, it is now feasible to examine the dialectal situations to the southwest of this literary triangle, in the regions that seem to have served as the source of the new ima series (Golar 1970, also Gallis 1960). It should be remembered that the spread of the literary language through education and the mass media is having its effect on the speech of the youngest generation, especially in urban areas. Nonetheless, even these speakers show a tendency to maintain the system of their parents in such areas as the semantic interpretation of verbal categories. Within the southwest region, which is relatively uniform in terms of morphological inventory, at least three semantic isoglosses can be distinguished with respect to status: 1) Korča-Kostur, 2) Ohrid-Prespa, 3) Bitola-Resen.2

2 It may well be that there are other semantic isoglosses and regions relating to status other than those I describe here, but these three are documentable and exemplary given the current status of available studies and my own fieldwork.
I shall begin with the Ohrid-Prespa isogloss because it provides the clearest illustration of the deceptiveness of basing the semantic analysis of verbal categories on the appearances of morphology rather than studying the two separately. The isogloss in question separates Ohrid from Struga (cf. Hendriks 1976: 221–24) and Resen, and it includes the dialects of Lower Prespa but not those of Korča and Kostur. Morphologically, the dialects of the region thus defined have an identical inventory to that of Prilep, except at the south end of Lower Prespa, where imal is not used as an auxiliary (Koneski, Vidoeski, Jašar-Nasteva 1966: 535). Semantically, however, these Ohrid-Prespa dialects are characterized by the fact that the old perfect has become a marked nonconfirmative, i.e., it has the same types of restrictions as forms of the type imal napraveno in Prilep-Veles. Thus the use of the I-form in its old perfect function or as an unmarked past (cf. examples 4 and 5 above) does not occur. In Ohrid, educated native speakers are aware of the difference between their local dialect and the literary language (Ola Tomik, Gordana Bošnakovska: Personal Communication). In Lower Prespa, this difference is eloquently attested to by the fact that Šklirov (1979: 86) could find no first person occurrences and very few second person examples. In these dialects, the perfect in ima has completely replaced the unmarked nonconfirmative functions of the old perfect. It is interesting to note that administrative-dubitative usage of the old perfect, which, as I have argued elsewhere (Friedman 1981) is a type of nonconfirmative does occur here:

(13) I toj si reče: "Poista bilo taka, ke si oda nazat..." I dojde doma. (Šklirov 1979: 79)

And he said to himself: "If that's the way it is, I'll go back..." And he came home.

The simple preterite and imaše perfect can also be used for un witnessed action (cf. Šklirov 1979: 76, 87, 160), although it is not clear from the available data if it can occur in overt reports.

In Kostur-Korča, the morphological inventory has essentially maintained the symmetry of the Old Church Slavonic system due to the loss of the I-form. Thus the simple preterite remains the same while the perfect in ima has replaced the old perfect and the pluperfect in imaše has replaced the old pluperfect; there is no form imal to be used as an auxiliary. Of interest here with regard to the diachronic development of synchronic isoglosses is the fact that the rare uses of the old perfect in tales and songs are generally administrative-dubitative (Koneski 1965: 148, Mazin 1936: 92, Šklirov 1973: 95, 99) as in the following examples from Bobošica (Korča region):

(14) "Oh kune! tuva si bill? Shko s'iskri?" (Mazin 1936, 180)
Hey, compadre, is this where you are? Why'dja hide?

In Kostur, the only survivals of the old perfect are occasional uses of bil 'be' (the admiring verb par excellence; see Friedman 1981) and a few occurrences in folk-songs (Šklirov 1973: 95, 99). With regard to the development of status, the Korča-Kostur dialects offer evidence that the old perfect had already become nonconfirmative by the time the ima series arose, since it is precisely the most highly marked development of unmarked nonconfirmative status that survives, but aside from these archaism status no longer functions as a category in Korča-Kostur.

It has been observed (Koneski 1965: 148) that there is confusion of the use of the simple preterite and the old perfect in Bitola, the former tending to replace the latter, a phenomenon of which speakers themselves are aware. Thus it can happen that a speaker from Bitola will use simple preterites in contexts where a speaker from elsewhere in Macedonia will mistakenly assume that the narration is based on first-hand experience. The weakening of the confirmative-nonconfirmative sense of the opposition between the simple preterite and the old perfect extends beyond Bitola proper, however, and evidence can be found in surrounding villages and the town of Resen. Thus in the village of Dihovo, 8 km. west of Bitola, I-forms are not consistently used in nonconfirmative contexts so much as in contexts of taxis (anteriority; cf. Groen 1977: 220-45 and Friedman Forthcoming). Similarly, the imal perfect does not appear to be a marked nonconfirmative. Thus a sentence such as example (10) is acceptable to speakers from Resen and Bitola (Friedman 1976: 98), and the one example of an imal perfect in Groen's (1977: 244) corpus occurs in a folktale where it is not so much nonconfirmative as anterior given the overall context. Thus, theBitola-Resen system, while containing an inventory identical to that of Prilep-Veles does not assign the same semantic values to the forms and seems in a sense to be moving toward a Korča-Kostur type of system.

The following table summarizes the correspondence between the relevant semantic isoglosses in the regions under discussion:

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<th>III.a</th>
<th>III.b</th>
<th>III.c</th>
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<td>Prilep-Veles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bitola-Resen</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<td>Ohrid/Pespa</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td>Korča-Kostur</td>
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The main points which can be drawn from the data presented here are the following:

1) Dialects with identical morphological inventories can differ in the semantic values assigned to the forms. It is therefore necessary in dialectological studies to establish semantic as well as morphological isoglosses.
2) The synchronic dialectological data from southwestern Macedonia support the idea that status was established as a category in the Macedonian verbal system before the rise of the perfect series in imi. The current situations illustrate the various routes that competition and development can take. Prilep represents the fullest realization of maintenance of both old and new forms by means of the new category of status. Ohrid-Prespa and Bitola-Resen, whence the imi series probably spread north and east, both show tendencies to limit the old perfect and thus expand the new – albeit in different ways. Ohrid-Prespa sharpens the status distinction, thus limiting occurrences of the old perfect, while Bitola-Resen weakens that distinction (or, perhaps, transforms it into one of taut) thus permitting other forms to substitute for it more easily. Korča-Kostur show at once the most morphologically innovative and semantically conservative developments. Having virtually eliminated the old perfect – a development unheard-of in the rest of Slavic – they have also eliminated the status opposition, which admirative archaisms show must have existed, and have thus returned to (maintained) the type of system characteristic of Old Church Slavonic.

While it is clear that these points are important for dialectology in general and Macedonian in particular, they are also of special relevance to Balkan linguistics in between. The types of semantic isoglosses I have described here might possibly be common to dialects of different Balkan languages spoken in the same region, thus creating "micro-Balkanisms" and providing additional evidence for the type of structural borrowing that distinguishes the Balkans as a linguistic area. The Albanian admiratives and compound pasts of the type kam pase bërë, kisha pase bërë 'I have/had done', which display considerable dialectal variation from the literary norm in their usage, could prove a fruitful comparison in this respect. What is needed is greater attention to the semantics of grammatical categories in dialect studies.

References


5 Koneski (1965: 148) gives an indication of this possibility in his statement that the use of simple preterites where old perfections would be expected in the Bitola dialect is connected with Aromanian influence.