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BALKAN INDICATIVITY: DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY

by Victor A. Friedman

The formally marked indicative categories in the five established Balkan literary languages, i.e. Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian, and Romanian, suggest a number of typological isoglosses that can be drawn on the basis of their comparison. The resultant groupings display a variety of alliances and differences regarding the treatment of verbal categories. It is the purpose of this article to show that various indicative categories reveal the following internal divisions within the Balkan linguistic league: Central vs Peripheral, Authochthonous-Latinized vs Slavo-Byzantine, North vs South, and East vs West.

A discussion of indicativity – Balkan or otherwise – must perforce confront the meaning of marked modality, to which it is opposed. I accept the definition used by scholars such as Aronson (1977), Golab (1964), Janakiev (1962), and Kuryłowicz (1956), i.e. that modality conveys the speaker’s objective (ontological) evaluation of the narrated event. By contrast, the speaker’s subjective (editorial) evaluation of the narrated event is taken as the definition of the grammatical category of status. When considering indicativity in the Balkans, it is first necessary to establish those categories with which it interacts on the formal and semantic levels, in other words, those additional grammatical categories for which indicative verb forms are morphologically marked. I will take as my general framework of comparison a modified scheme of generic verbal categories based on Jakobson (1957). In that article, Jakobson proposed a system of ten generic verbal categories of which the three sub-paradigmatic categories, viz. person, number, and gender, do not present semantic peculiarities of interest here. Likewise the supraparadigmatic category of voice is beyond the scope of the topics to be considered in this paper. Of the remaining six categories, I have already defined mood and status, albeit the definitions I am using, based on later research, are essentially the reverse of
Jakobson’s original formulations. I accept Jakobson’s definitions of aspect, tense, and taxis, i.e., quantification of the narrated event, relation of the narrated event to the speech event, and relation of two narrated events, respectively. I have eliminated Jakobson’s tenth category (evidentiality), however, and added a category I call resultativity. Jakobson posited the category evidentiality to account for morphologically marked reported speech, but, as I have argued elsewhere (Friedman 1981), the reported meaning Jakobson attributes to a special evidential category in the Balkan languages is in fact a form of non-confirmative status. This is to say that the meaning ‘reportedness’ is simply a contextual variant meaning implied by the speaker’s use of a non-confirmative form. The same form is used to narrate events which the speaker deduced or even witnessed but does not wish to present as confirmed. I have found it necessary to posit the category resultativity, which I define as the relation of the narrated event to another event defined by reference, in order to account for certain perfects, which cannot otherwise be included in Jakobson’s schema. I will thus be considering Balkan indicativity in terms of its relation to the following categories: status, aspect, resultativity, tense, and taxis. Nonetheless, the modification and redefinition of generic verbal categories by itself is not sufficient for an adequate analysis of Balkan verbal systems. This is due to two facts: 1) A given form may appear to be marked at times for one generic category and at other times for another, e.g., Macedonian ké gojeue as iterative (aspect) or conditional (mood); 2) The marking of a given grammatical opposition may be altered, neutralized, or even reversed if marking for some other grammatical category is present, e.g., in Macedonian marking for confirmative status in the simple preterite becomes reversed to non-confirmative in the past resultative, in Albanian the aspect of the auxiliary in the pluperfect (aorist/imperfect) can be influenced by the voice of the verb (active/passive). This second fact is also relevant for cross-linguistic comparisons. Thus, for example, in Balkan Slavic, the aspectual opposition aorist/imperfect is neutralized in marked modal contexts – only the imperfect can occur – but the opposition is maintained in forms marked for status. In Albanian, on the other hand, the same aspectual opposition is neutralized in forms marked for status – again only the imperfect can occur – but both the aorist and imperfect can occur in marked modal contexts. The similarities which exist between pairs of categories, i.e., mood and status, and resultativity, and tense and taxis, have led me to posit the use of three macro-categories which I call qualification or evaluation (mood and status), quantification (aspect and result), and location (tense and taxis). This system has two major advantages. First of all, it displays the relationship between traditional categories such as mood and less familiar categories such as status – which are distinct but are often confused due to the fact that they both involve evaluation – in a manner that relates the new distinctions to a traditional framework readily accessible to a scholarly audience while preserving the integrity of the nontraditional innovations. Secondly, the relationships between different generic categories such as aspect and mood in Macedonian can now be described as a relationship or area of semantic overlap between two macro-categories, creating oppositions which can be termed axes or complexes. Cross-linguistic phenomena such as the complementary distribution of (aorist/imperfect) aspect and mood in Balkan Slavic and aspect and status in Albanian can likewise be treated in a single framework of relationships between quantification and qualification.

In considering Balkan indicative categories in light of the foregoing, it is striking that, having chosen to define the set of forms being considered by one of the two generic categories belonging to the macro-category of qualification, viz. mood (or, more precisely, the unmarked mood) it is precisely the other generic category within the macro-category of qualification, i.e., status, which provides a means of establishing a basic typological distinction within the Balkan league. The presence vs. absence of indicative status categories divides the Balkan languages into a central and a peripheral group. The central group, consisting of Albanian, Bulgarian, and Macedonian is characterized by the presence of indicative status categories. (Such categories also occur in Megleno-Romanian and some Aromanian dialects. On the former see Atanasov 1990:220-221, the latter have heretofore not been described - cf. Fiedler 1968:131 - but I have discovered them in the course of recent fieldwork.) In these languages, the speaker can indicate or imply doubt, surprise, irony, reportedness or any other type of non-confirmation by
choosing a verb form marked for non-confirmativity in Albanian (the admisurative, e.g. present genka genë 'he is', perfect paska genë 'he has been', imperfect genkësh 'he was'), pluperfect paskësh genë 'he had been') or not marked for confirmativity in Slavic (the various indicative forms based on the 1-participle, e.g. Macedonian pravel, imal praveno, Bulgarian pravil, bil pravil). As I have just indicated, the difference between Slavic and Albanian status marking is that in Albanian it is non-confirmative status which is marked whereas in Slavic it is the confirmative which is marked (beše vs bil) and nonconfirmativity is the result of contextual variant meanings implied by the use of unmarked forms.

In the peripheral languages, i.e. Greek and Romanian, there are no indicative marked status categories. In Romanian, there is series of constructions called the presumptive mood (modal presuntiv) formed with the future, conditional and invariant subjunctive of a fi 'to be' and the gerund of the main verb, e.g. voi-veiva vomi/vei / vor fi lucrind, as / ai / ar / am / ați / ar fi lucrind, sa fi lucrind. These constructions render non-confirmative meanings similar to the Albanian admisurative, e.g. surprise, doubt, reportedness, etc. (Graur et al 1966:223-4, 271). In Greek, there are a number of emotive constructions with the modal particle na (Householder, Kazazis, Koutsoudas 1964:110-111) and various tense forms which can be used to render similar meanings. In both these languages, however, these constructions are modal and not indicative, as indicated by the use of a modal particle or construction. The indicative nature of the Central groups' constructions is further evidenced by the fact that in Albanian the negator for the admisurative is the indicative nuk, not the modal mos, while in Macedonian modal forms (except the imperative) must be subordinated to a modal particle, whereas status forms need not be. The indicative nature of status in Bulgarian has been the subject of a protracted debate. My own arguments with regard to Bulgarian have been based entirely on semantic criteria since Bulgarian, unlike Macedonian, permits the occurrence of unsubordinated, i.e. unpaticulated, modal forms (cf. Gerdžikov 1984, Friedman 1980, Aronson 1977).

Moving now from qualification to location, i.e. tense-taxis, we find that the same Central-Peripheral Typological distinction obtains, i.e. those languages with indicative status categories have more taxic distinctions and more complicated tense relati-

ons. While some of the taxic complications in the central group stem from the use of indicative status, this is not always the case. Other complexities arise from interaction with the quantifying macro-category (aspect-resultativity). Beginning this time with the taxic distinctions of the peripheral languages, Greek and Romanian, we see that each of these languages has a single pluperfect which can be realized in two different forms. In Greek, the (active) pluperfect is formed by means of the imperfect of 'have' (x') and the indeclinable aorist in -ei or the participle e.g. eída, eíxes, eíxe, eíxame, eíxate, eíxan + děsildeméno (děnì 'bind')².

In Romanian, the standard pluperfect is synthetic form with the marker -se-after the (3 sg) aorist stem, e.g. lucrá-se- + m, -si,-c,-rără, -rățe,-ă or -m, -și,-c,-m,-ți,-c (Graur et al. 1966:260-1). There is also a compound pluperfect formed with the perfect of 'be' and the past participle, e.g. am fost văzut ('I had seen' or 'I have been seen') but this is archaic and/or dialectal and is not semantically distinct (Graur et al. 1966:252, cf., also Friedman 1977:127). In the Central languages, by contrast, the number of pluperfects is greatly increased by oppositions of status, aspect, and resultativity. Although I will be discussing the quantifying oppositions later, it will suffice here to say that all the Central languages have an aorist/imperfect aspirant opposition and Macedonian has markedly (true) resultative perfect/pluperfect series using 'have' (ima). It is worthy of note that the inventory of pluperfect forms in each of the Central Balkan literary languages is not entirely stable due to dialect variation and the potential maximalization of the combinatory possibilities of the available morphemic material, viz. the auxiliary and the participial form of the main verb. Macedonian and Bulgarian both have pluperfects using the aforementioned participle in -1 which can carry the opposition aorist/imperfect, e.g. napravlil/napravel. Macedonian can also use a verbal adjective in -n/-t, e.g. napraweno. Albanian pluperfects all use the same participial form of the main verb, e.g. bere. Bulgarian uses various forms of the auxiliary 'be', Albanian uses 'have' (in the active) and Macedonian uses both 'be' and 'have' as auxiliaries. The maximal potential systems of the three languages are given in Table One. Taking even the minimal acceptable literary systems, Macedonian has 4 distinct pluperfects and Bulgarian and Albanian have at least 3 or 4.
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of resultativity presents an even more fragmented picture. Greek and Macedonian both have perfect forms using the auxiliary 'have' which clearly opposes both the aorist and the imperfect (or perfective and imperfective past) as resultative. The corresponding Bulgarian 'have' construction is not paradigmatic, i.e. it is a syntactic construction, of e.g.

Macedonian  Bulgarıan
Toj ima napišano osum raboti Toj ima napisani osem raboti
Toj ima dojdeno  Toj ima dojdeno

In Albanian, the aorist and perfect overlap in their functions to the extent that one of the two forms generally replaces the other in the dialects, and even in the literary language the distinction has become blurred. In Romanian, the perfect has completely replaced the aorist except in Oltenia, and a few other areas, where the reverse has occurred. In terms of quantification, therefore, the typological distinction connects what can be called the "autochthonous and Latinized" in opposition to the "Slavo-Byzantine".

Taking the presence and absence of different types of indicative categories discussed here as isoglosses, we can draw the typological map of the Balkans given in Figure One.

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1) Although it would be desirable to include Balkan Romani and Balkan Turkish, as well as Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, Dzhudezmo and the dialects of those literary languages considered here (cf. Topolinska 1991, 1992), such a work is beyond the scope of this paper.

2) In the north the participle is a frozen form, but in some dialects displays agreement.

REFERENCES


Janakiev, Miroslav. 1962. "Za gramemite narišani v bulgarska gramasi na 'segadno vreme' i 'bitlešte vreme.'" Izvestija na Institut za Bulgarski Ezik 8, 420-432.

