Morphological Innovation and Semantic Shift
in Macedonian[*]

Victor A Friedman, University of North Caolina Chapel Hill

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 signals the presence of an expected corresponding meaning. Thus, dialectological studies have always concentrated on phonology, morphology, and lexicology but have given little or no place to syntax and semantics. STOJKOV'S (1975) dialectological atlas is typical in this regard: out of 314 features, 153 are phonological, 69 are morphological, 86 are lexical (e.g., *nazvanija na sofra* 'names for table'), 3 are syntactic, and 3 are semantic in that they concern different meanings assigned to individual lexical items (viz., *mrašen* 'dirty' vs 'greasy', *ljut* 'hot' vs. 'sour', *cest* '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. FRIEDMAN 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 Classis 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* [GRAUR 1966: 216, 218, et passim]) and perhaps the Greek exclusion of perfects from nonvolitional clauses (Joseph Pentheroudakis cited in FRIEDMAN 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 *l*-form), which was based on the aorist stem, and 3) the pluperfect, based on the *l*-form with the imperfective aorist or imperfect auxiliary 'be'. For the purposes of this discussion, the standard charcterizations 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 dialect 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 *Suprasliensis;* LUNT 1974: 98)
2) The development of an *l*-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 *l*-form (attested in the thirteenth century for Serbian and fifteenth for Bulgarian; BEJIC´ 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 eighteenth century; KONESKI 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-Ostrovo-Kajlar; VIDOESKI 1962/63: 93)

2. Presence of an imperfect *l*-form (west of an isogloss running southeast from Kumanovo into Aegean Macedonia, where it meanders eastward north of Valoviste, east of Serez, southwest of Ziljahovo, and north of Drama; IVANOV 1972: 126)

3. Use of *bil* as an auxiliary (east of Delcevo, Kukus, Solun' VIDOESKI 1962/63: 97)

4. Use of perfect constructions in *ima,* etc. (KONESKI, VIDOESKI, AND JASAR-NASTEVA 1966: 521-22, 524-35):

      A. present perfect *ima dojdeno* (west of Gostivar-Vardar-Gevgelija-Kukus-Struma/sporadic to Tetovo-Kriva Palanka-Serez)

      B. pluperfect *imase dojdeno* (same as above without sporadic spread)

      C. *l*-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) **Rristo tvrdi deka Koco ja imase svrseno rabotata.*
     'Risto claims that Koco finished the job.' (cf. FRIEDMAN 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 veruvam deka tie go napravija toa.*
        *'I don't believe they did it.' but 'I can't believe they did it [despite the fact that I know they did]. (cf. FRIEDMAN 1977: 43)[1]
    (3) *No podocna se slucija raboti za koi ne znaev.*
     'But after that things happened which I didn't know about.'
      (ibid.: 15)
    (4) *Rece deka bese 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 meraklija za cveka.*
      'My father used to be very fond of flowers.' (ibid.: 54)
   B. Reported:
    (7) *Covekov bil od Amerika.*
      'This man [said he] is/was from America.' (ibid.: 71)
   C.   Admirative-Dubitative:
    (8) *Ti si bil Rom! Ne sum znael!*
      'Oh, you're a Gypsy! I didn't know.' (ibid.: 78)
    (9) *- Toj poveke od tebe znae za boksiranje.*
     - Toj poveke znael!
      - 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)

---

[1] It is important to stress here the fact that the Macedonian example sentence is not ungrammatical in and of itself. What is ungrammatical is a felicitous (literal) reading of the sentence, 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.

(12) *Sto znam, mozebi sum go imal storeno.*
    'Who knows, maybe I have done it.' (ibid.: 111)

The dialect region bounded roughly by Prilep, Veles, and Kic§evo, 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 *imase* 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 resultative to unmarked (nonconfirmative) in the old perfect had already begun at an early date, as hints of it are found in the oldest Slavic *paterikon* (WIJK 1933). The significantly later rise of the new perfect series in *ima,* etc. is reflected in the fact that the newer confirmative/nonconfirmative distinction, which is realized privatively in the oler, less marked forms, is realized equipollently as marked nonreported/nonconfirmative in the newest, most highly marked forms, i.e., those in *imase* and *imal.*

With this background of Old Church Slavonic and Literary Macedonian (= Prilep-Veles-Kicevo) 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 (GOLAB 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) Korca-Kostur, 2) Ohrid-Prespa, 3) Bitola-Resen.[2]

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 Korca 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, JASAR-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 *l*-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 (OLGA TOMIK¡, GORDANA BOSNAKOVSKA: Personal Communication). In Lower Prespa, this difference is eloquently attested to by the fact tha SKLIFOV (1979: 86) could find no first person occurrences and very few second person examples.[3] In these dialects, the perfect in *ima* has completely replaced the unmarked nonconfirmative functions of the old perfect. It is interesting to note that admirative-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 se rece: "Posto bilo taka, ke si oda nazat. . ." I dojde doma.*
(SKLIFOV 1979: 79)

---

[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 examplary given the current status of available studies and my own fieldwork.

[3] In fact, SKLIFOV (1979: 80) does report that first person *l*-forms occur rarely as past indefinites, but without sufficient context and explanation to determine if these might not be the result of external influence, archaism, etc.

3

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

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

In Kostur-Korca, the morphological inventory has essentially maintained the symmetry of the Old Church Slavonic system due to the loss of the *l*-form. Thus the simple preterite remains the same while the perfect in *ima* has replaced the old perfect and the pluperfect in *imase* 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 admirative-dubitative (KONESKI 1965: 148, MAZON 1936: 92, S¢KLIFOV 1973: 95, 99) as in the following examples from Boboscica (Korca region):[4]

(14) *"Oh kume! tuva si bill? Shço s'iskri?"* (MAZON 1936, 180)
Hey, compadre, is this where you are? Why'dja hide?
(15) - *"Ot gje znjë toj koj e kashjëjo tvoj?"*
- *"Am ka ne znjëll? Toj znjë shço çini Gospo a ne poznava kasheiti togovi?"* (MAZON 1936: 314)
- "How's he supposed to know which is your piece?"
- "But how can he not know? He knows what the Lord is doing but he doesn't know his own pieces?"

In Kostur, the only survivals of the old perfect are occasional uses of *bil* 'be' (the admirative verb par excellence; see FRIEDMAN 1981) and a few occurrences in folksongs (SKLIFOV 1973: 95, 99). With regard to the development of status, the Korca-Kostur dialects offer evidence the 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 archaisms status no longer functions as a category in Korca-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, *l*-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, the Bitola-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 Korca-Kostur type of system.

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

	III.a	III.b	III.c	IV
Prilep-Veles	+	+	+	+
Bitola-Resen	+	+	+	-
Ohrid/Prespa	-	+	+	+/0
Korca-Kostur	-	-	+	0

---

[4] Such usage can be felicitously compared to archaic second and third person singulars in English (thou shalt, he maketh, etc.).

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 *ima*. 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 *ima* 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 occurences of the old perfect, while Bitola-Resen weakens that distinction (or, perhaps, tranforms it into one of taxis) thus permitting other forms to substitute for it more easily. Korca-Kostur show at one 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 pasë bërë, kisha pasë 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.[6]   What is needed is greater attention to the semantics of grammatical categories in dialect studies.

References

BELIC´,A. 1969. Istorija srpskohrvatskog jezika, vol.2, pt.2. Beograd: Naucna Knjiga.
DEJANOVA, MARIJA. 1969. *Za hronologijata na preizkaznite formi v baľgarskija ezik.* Baľgarski ezik 19.
DEJANOVA, MARIJA. 1970. *Istorijata na slozenite minali vremena v baľgarski, sabohařvatski i slovenski ezik.* Sofia: BAN.
FRIEDMAN, VICTOR A. 1976. *Dialectal Synchrony and Diachronic Syntax: The Macedonian Perfect.* Papers from the Parasession on Diachronic Syntax, ed. by S. Steever, C. Walker, and S. Mufwene, pp.96-102. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
FRIEDMAN, VICTOR A. 1977. *The Grammatical Categories of the Macedonian Indicative.* Columbus: Slavica.
FRIEDMAN, VICTOR A. 1981. *Admirativity and Confirmativity.* Zeitschrift für Balkanologie. 17,1.12-28.
FRIEDMAN, VICTOR A. Forthcoming. *Za slozenite minati vreminja vo dihovskiot govor vo sporedba so makedonskiot literaturen jazik i drŭgite dijalekti.* Jazikot i jazicnite procesi vo Bitola i bitolsko. Bitola: Bitolsko Drustvo za Nauka Umetnost.
GALLIS, ARNE. 1960. *Die neuen slavischen Perfekte vom Typus factum habeo, *casus sum *casum habeo.* Scando-Slavica 6. 176-88.
GOLAB, ZBIGNIEW. 1970. *Za 'mehanizmot' na slovensko-romanskite odnosi na balkanskiot poluostrov.* Makedonski jazik 21.5-18.

---

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

GRAUR, AL. et al. 1966. *Granatica limbii roma§ne,* vol. 1. Bucureşţi: Academia Rupublicii Socialiste Roma§nia.

GROEN, BERNARDUS M. 1977. *A Structural Description of the Macedonian Dialect of Dihovo.* Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press.

HAMP, ERIC P. 1979. *Linguistic Areas or Cluster?* Quatrie``me Congre`s International des E¡tudes du Sud-Est Europe¡en: Abre¡ge¡s des communications, 282-83. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.

HENDRIKS, PETER. 1976. *The Radozda-Vevcani Dialects of Macedonian.* Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press.

IVANOV, JORDAN N. 1972. *Baľgarski dialekten atlas: Baľgarski govori ot Egejska Makedonija,* I. Sofia: BAN.

KONESKI, BLAZE. 1965. *Istorijata na makedonskiot jazik.* Skopje: Koco Racin.

KONESKI, BLAZE VIDOESKI, OLIVERA JASAR-NASTEVA. 1966. *Eistribution des balkanismes en mace¡donien.* Actes du Premier Congre`s děs Etudes Balkaniques et Sud-Est Europe¡en, vol6, ed. by I. Gaľabov, V. Georgiev, and J. Zaimov, pp.517-46. Sofia: BAN.

LUNT, HORACE. 1974. *Old Church Slavonic Grammar,* 6th ed. The Hague: Mouton.

MAZON, ANDRE¡. 1936. *Documents, contes et chansons slaves de l'Albanie du Sud.* Paris: Droz.

SKLIFOV, BLAGOJ. 1973. *Kosturskijat govor* (I'rudove po baľgarska dialektologija 8). Sofia: BAN.

SKLIFOV, BLAGOJ. 1979. *Dolno-prespanskijat govor* (Trudove po baľgarska dialektologija 11). Sofia: BAN.

STOJKOV, STOJKO. 1975. *Baľgarski dialekten atlas III: Jugozapadna Baľgaria.* Sofia: BAN.

VIDOESKI, BOZO. 1962/63. *Makedonskite dijalekti vo svetlinata na lingvistickata geografija.* Makedonski jazik 13/14. 87-108.

WIJK, NICOLAS VAN. 1933. *De l'emploi du parfait et de l'aoriste en vieux-slave.* Revue des e¡tudes slaves 13. 242-44.