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## STRUCTURAL AND GENERATIVE APPROACHES TO AN ANALYSIS OF THE MACEDONIAN PRETERITE

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This article will attempt to show that the two most common past tense forms of Macedonian are opposed to one another in terms of affirmation and that this opposition can be described in both structural and generative terms. The two sets of past tense forms under consideration are the simplex pasts and the *sum* series, which consists of the old past active participle in /-1/ and the auxiliary verb *sum* 'be' in the first two persons (see Appendix). The opposition aorist/imperfect is an aspectual one which will not be treated here. Also excluded from consideration are the various perfect and pluperfect forms.

The first four examples are intended to demonstrate that none of the traditional meanings of the Macedonian preterite are without counter-examples:<sup>1</sup>

1. *Vo dva saatot včera jas sum go skršil šišeto namerno* 'At two o'clock yesterday I broke the bottle on purpose'
2. *Toaletot stanal ezero na nečistotija (Počinka 6 VII 74:17)* 'The toilet has become a lake of filth'
3. *Kaži kako begaše!* 'Tell how you eloped!'
4. *Koga go vidov nego, toj veké gi kupi kartite* 'When I saw him, he had already bought the tickets'

The *sum* series cannot be marked as "unwitnessed," "reported," "indefinite," or "distanced" since its use in 1 contradicts all of these meanings and its use in 2 (which was a statement made by a Macedonian tourist to a guard at the Bulgarian border after attempting to relieve himself) contradicts the first two. Example 3 was addressed by a legitimate daughter to her mother and so it shows, as does 4, that concepts such as "witnessed," "nonreported," and "definite" do not suffice to capture the meaning of the simplex past.

Examples 5 and 6 demonstrate the crucial difference between the simplex past and the *sum* series, viz. a simplex past form cannot be subordinated to a verb which directly contradicts the notion of affirmation, e.g. *ne veruvam* 'I don't believe' or *se somnevam* 'I doubt':

5. *Ne veruvam deka toj go napravil toa* 'I don't believe that he did it'

6. \**Ne veruvam deka toj go napravi toa* 'I don't believe that he did it' Example 5 uses the 1-form of *napravi* 'do,' while 6 uses a simplex past form and is therefore ungrammatical. In structural terms, the unacceptability of 6 is due to the fact that the simplex past is marked for affirmativity.

The unacceptability of 6 can also be accounted for with a generative framework by means of performative analysis. In performative theory, ordinary declarative sentences are subordinated to higher abstract clauses of the type *I ASSERT (to) you* at an early stage in their derivation.<sup>2</sup> Thus in 5, *napravit* is subordinated to *ne veruvam*, which in turn is subordinated to an abstract unmarked verb of assertion. Since the present form *ne veruvam* and the 1-form *napravit* are both unmarked, no problem arises. In the case of 6, however, the simplex past form *napravi* would have to be subordinated to a marked declarative indicating the speaker's strong, personal vouching for the truth of the statement, e.g. *AFFIRM*, while the present form *ne veruvam* would have to be subordinated to a higher verb of the type *ASSERT*. The two clauses would be joined by some form of conjunction, so that at an early stage of the derivation under discussion the sentence would read something like: *I ASSERT (to) you that I don't believe that he did it, AND I AFFIRM (to) you that he did it*. The result is a logical contradiction and an ill-formed sentence (see Sadock).

In sentences 7 and 8, examples are given of special circumstances under which it is possible to subordinate a simplex form to a clause of the type *ne veruvam*:

7. *Toj ne veruva deka tie go napravija toa* 'He doesn't believe that they did it'

8. *Prosto ne mi se veruva deka toj go praveše toa!* 'I simply can't believe that he was doing it!'

In example 7, the speaker is personally affirming that *they* did it, despite the fact that *he* does not believe it. In example 8, the use of *ne veruvam* is not literal. Its illocutionary force is that of an expression of surprise rather than disbelief, and it is thus "infelicitous" in Austin's terms; "insincere" in Searle's.<sup>3</sup> This usage is of the same type as 'I can't believe it!' in English.

Examples 9–12 are intended to demonstrate that there exists in Macedonian a hierarchy of affirmation. While it is ungrammatical to have an affirmative tense form subordinated to a verb whose lexical meaning is antiaffirmative, (e.g. *ne veruvam*,) it is possible to subordinate affirmative, i.e. simplex, tense forms to verbs whose meanings do not appear to go well with the notion of affirmation (e.g. *mislam* 'I think,' *izgleda* 'it appears, apparently,' *činam* 'I suppose'). In most of these cases, there is a clear correlation between the category of person and the tense form of the subordinated verb—one often finds a simplex first person but a *sum* series third person:

9. *Mislam deka pogrešiv što ja prijaviv vašata pokana* (N. M. 7 XI 73:16) 'I think I was mistaken in accepting your invitation'

10. *Izgleda deka spievme premnogu. Prašav dali e toa Pariz, a mi odgovorija na španski.* (N. M. 17 X 72:14) [on a train] 'It appears that we overslept. I asked if this was Paris, and they answered me in Spanish.'

11. *Jas mislam deka toa go napravile samite Demokrati* (N. M. 9 VI 74:6) 'I think that the Democrats did it themselves' (W. H. 58)

12. *Izgleda deka [tie] ne uspeale da pravaat poznačeaen probiv* (N. M. 15 X 73:1) 'It appears that [they] did not succeed in making a more significant penetration'

In examples 9 and 10, the speaker is affirming her own thoughts. In 11 and 12, however, the *sum* form is used, since the speaker in 11 uses the unmarked form to indicate that the proposition is an unsubstantiated one, while in 12 a simple fact is being presented in a newspaper article.

In 13, 14, and 15, non-first person simplex forms are subordinated to these somewhat unaffirmative verbs:

13. *Mislam deka Bob Vi zboruvaše deka Stens bi možele da go upotrebuвате kako žrtven kon . . .* (N. M. 11 VI 74:5) 'I understand that you and Bob have talked about running Stans out as a sort of stalking horse . . .' (W. H. 58)

14. *Mi izgleda deka toa mi go rekoa site* (N. M. 26 VI 74:5) 'I guess everybody told me that' (W. H. 514)

15. *Taa duri, činam, pateše* 'She even, I suppose, suffered'

In 13, the use of a third person affirmative—*zboruvaše* 'talked'—indicates that although the speaker may not have direct knowledge of the event expressed in the subordinated proposition, he is essentially accepting it as proven. It is interesting to note that in 13, which was originally translated from English to Macedonian, the degree of assurance expressed by *mislam* 'I think' with a subordinated affirmative in Macedonian is expressed by a different lexical item, viz. *understand*, in the main clause in English. The use of an affirmative tense form in 14 is explained by the fact that the first person is directly involved, albeit as an object rather than as a subject. In 15, it is the speaker's conviction of the truth of the deduction which motivates the choice of an affirmative form.

The last three examples are taken from the newspaper *Nova Make-donija* and show contrasting tense form usage. They are intended to illustrate how the affirmative nature of the simplex past can affect the choice of tense forms:

16a. *Indiski trupi navlegoa vo Sikim* (N. M. 7 IV 73:5) 'Indian troops entered Sikkim'

16b. *Indiski trupi navlegle vo Sikim (ibid.)* 'Indian troops entered Sikkim'

17. *Sirenite i denes dvapati se oglasile vo Kairo, no žitelite na egipetskata*

*prestolnina nemea pričina za zagriženost* (N. M. 16 X 73:1) 'The sirens sounded twice again today in Cairo, but the citizens of the Egyptian capital had no cause for concern'

18. *Znaev deka toj beše tvorec na nekoj mošne čuvstvitelni operaciji dodeka raboteše za Belata Kuka, i deka gi organiziral dobro* (N. M. 15 VI 74:5) 'I was aware [of the fact] that he had done some extremely sensitive things [for the White House] while he had been (working) at the White house and he had apparently done them well' (W. H. 135)

In example 16a & b, the simplex aorist—*navlegoa* 'entered'—occurred in the heading of the article, while the opening sentence of the article used the same phrase, but with the l-aorist—*navlegle* 'entered.' The headline used the simplex past to render the emotional impact of an affirmation, while the article itself merely conveyed the information in the form of an unmarked assertion. In example 17, the first verb—*oglasile* 'sounded'—is an l-form used for the simple statement of a fact, while the second verb—*nemea* 'they didn't have'—is a simplex past being used for an editorial comment. In this context, the use of the *sum* form to assert the sounding of the sirens is unmarked, while the use of the simplex past to affirm the citizens' security is a marked, personal assurance on the part of the writer. In the last example, the simplex pasts *beše* 'was' and *raboteše* 'worked' and the l-form *organiziral* 'organized' are all subordinated to the simplex past *znaev* 'I knew.' The speaker's awareness of what the other person had done is affirmed, while his knowledge of the quality of the work is presented as indirect, i.e. unaffirmed. This is accomplished lexically in English by the use of *apparently*, but grammatically in Macedonian by the use of the l-form of *organizira* in opposition to the simplex past tense forms in the rest of the sentence.

In structural terms, the distinction between simplex past tense forms and the *sum* series is one of "status," i.e. the speaker's evaluation of the narrated event.<sup>4</sup> The simplex past has a marked invariant meaning of "affirmative," i.e. the speaker is convinced of and vouching for the truth of the statement. This basic meaning is clearest in the third person, since the speaker is almost always assumed to be vouching for the truth of a statement made in the first person. But it is precisely this combination of first person and affirmative meaning that causes the simplex past to occur freely after verbs of supposition and deduction, while such uses of the simplex past in the third person are restricted and uncommon.

The expression of affirmation by means of the simplex past in Macedonian is a phenomenon which can be handled structurally by means of distinctive feature markings or generatively by means of higher predicates. The complicated interrelations of this grammatical category and other

categories such as person on the one hand, and the lexical meanings of the verbs to which it is applied and subordinated on the other, have great potential for the further study of the syntactic and semantic expressions of such concepts as assertion and affirmation, as well as presupposition and factivity.

## Appendix

## SIMPLEX SERIES

		Simplex Pasts			
		imperfect	aorist		
<i>present</i>					
<i>pravam</i>	<i>pravime</i>	<i>pravev</i>	<i>pravevme</i>	<i>praviv</i>	<i>pravivme</i>
<i>praviš</i>	<i>pravite</i>	<i>praveše</i>	<i>pravevte</i>	<i>pravi</i>	<i>pravivte</i>
<i>pravi</i>	<i>pravat</i>	<i>praveše</i>	<i>pravea</i>	<i>pravi</i>	<i>pravija</i>

## SUM SERIES

<i>l-imperfect</i>		<i>l-aorist</i>	
<i>sum pravel</i>	<i>sme pravele</i>	<i>sum pravil</i>	<i>sme pravile</i>
<i>si pravel</i>	<i>ste pravele</i>	<i>si pravil</i>	<i>ste pravile</i>
<i>pravel</i>	<i>pravele</i>	<i>pravil</i>	<i>pravile</i>

\* The conjugation of *pravi* 'to do' in the present and nonperfect past (N. B. *sum* is the present of "be." The 3rd person [3s e, 3p se] is not used as an auxiliary.)

## NOTES

- In this article Macedonian translations of *The White House Transcripts*, ed. Irwin Horowitz et al. (New York: Bantam, 1974) will be cited as they appeared in the daily newspaper *Nova Makedonija*. These translations sometimes differ from the originals on very minor points of vocabulary and construction which do not affect the point being illustrated in any way. Rather than burden the reader with tedious and unnecessary explanations, the originals and translations will be cited exactly as they appeared, and irrelevant discrepancies will be ignored. The material from *The White House Transcripts* will be designated by W. H. Other material from *Nova Makedonija* will be abbreviated N.M. Some examples are from the weekly periodical *Počinka*. All examples whose sources are not specified were supplied by or checked with native informants.
- See Jerrold M. Sadock, *Toward a Linguistic Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Academic Press, 1974), 134.
- John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1962), 14; John R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), 57-64.
- See Howard I. Aronson, "Interrelationships between Aspect and Mood in Bulgarian," *Studies in Slavic Morphology*, eds. Kenneth E. Naylor and Demetrius Koubourlis (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1976).