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A COMPARISON BETWEEN GRAMMATICALIZATION PROCESS OF FUTURE TENSE IN GREEK AND SERBIAN

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to describe and compare a common Balkan feature in Greek and Serbian, the periphrastic *will* future and the degree of grammaticalization in both languages, in order to reach conclusions about the similarities and the differences of the two processes and stages of grammaticalization from a diachronic point of view. First, Greek future tense and its development are analyzed from Ancient Greek to Modern Greek, and then the development of future tense from Old Church Slavonic to Serbian is described. To conclude, grammaticalization stages and future marker development are compared diachronically.

KEYWORDS: Balkan Sprachbund, Balkan languages, periphrastic future, future marker, grammaticalization, Greek, Serbian.

1. Introduction

This paper deals with Balkan linguistics and with two Balkan Sprachbund languages, Greek and Serbian. The Balkan Sprachbund is considered a linguistic league, where languages share grammatical and lexical features that resulted from language contact and not because they belong to one common linguistic group (Friedman 2006). Balkan languages are Greek, Albanian, which belong to two independent linguistic families, Balkan Slavic languages, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, and Romanian, a Romance language.

Despite the fact that they do not have a common linguistic source, they all developed common phonological and morphosyntactic features, one of these is the construction of periphrastic future tense, formed by a periphrasis introduced by a clitic derived from the verb *will* followed by a finite verb, an infinitive or by a subjunctive construction. This future clitic is the result of the grammaticalization process undergone by the main verb *will*.

The process through which a lexical item, in this case the main verb *will* loses its lexical meaning and becomes a grammatical word, the clitic, is called grammaticalization (Hopper – Traugott 2003). More specifically the main verb *will* loses its volitional meaning and acquires only a future one. Grammaticalization process is identified by the following four parameters:

- desemantization when a word loses its lexical meaning,
- extension which is the new use of this word in other contexts,
- decategorialization that is a loss in morphosyntactic features
- erosion which is a loss in phonetic substance (Heine – Kuteva 2003).

In addition, Kramer (1994) identifies the following grammaticalization parameters which can verify the grammaticalization degree of future tense marker in Balkan languages.

- a. Degree of lexical separation of the auxiliary from the lexical verb
- b. Degree of inflection for person and tense and degree of reduction of the auxiliary verb to a monosyllabic particle
- c. Reinterpretation as a clitic rather than a verb
- d. Syntactic relation to the main verb, interpolation of other lexical content between the auxiliary and the main verb.
- e. Semantic range, the auxiliary is also used for desire, obligation, conditional, imperatives.

The more parameters a future auxiliary fulfills, the more the grammaticalization is complete. As far as future tense is concerned, the grammaticalization of *will* future undergoes the following cycle: *will* → intention → future, and more specifically: lexical verb *want* → auxiliary verb → clitic → affix/particle (Hopper – Traugott 2003:108).

2. Grammaticalization process of future tense in Greek and Serbian

2.1. The development of periphrastic future in Greek, from Ancient Greek to the Cretan Renaissance.

The development of Greek and the stages of grammaticalization of future can be divided into five periods, that are Ancient Greek, Hellenistic-Roman (III BC – IV AD), Early Medieval (V–X), Late Medieval (XI–XV) and Cretan Renaissance (XVI–XVII).

In Ancient Greek the future was expressed by a synthetic one, *γράφω*, and by periphrastic forms, through the verbs *μέλλω* (to be going to), *έχω* (to have) and *θέλω* (to want) + infinitive (Markopoulos 2009).

During the Hellenistic-Roman period (H-R) the synthetic future was lost in favor of the *θέλω* periphrasis, because it did not convey the meaning of verbal aspect (Browning 1983:48–9), and it started to be confused with the subjunctive form, as the only difference between the synthetic future and the subjunctive was the vocal length, which was lost in the same period (Mackridge – Holton – Manolesou 2019).

Contemporarily, the infinitive becomes weaker and it starts to be replaced by a finite clause introduced by the complementizer *να*. Therefore, there are now two different ways to express future in a periphrastic way, a *θέλω* + infinitive clause (1) and a *θέλω να* + finite verb clause (2).

- (1) *Θέλω γράφειν*
will.1sg. write.inf.
- (2) *Θέλω να γράφω*
will.1sg. subj. write.1.sg

With the passing of time and for all the duration of the Early Medieval period (EMG) the first one conveys only a future meaning, whereas the second is also used to express volition (Markopoulos 2009). So far, auxiliary verb *θέλω* goes through the processes of extension and desemanticization, as it is used in a future context and it gradually loses its lexical meaning when combined with the infinitive, consolidating its new acquired future meaning.

The most important grammaticalization stages of the *θέλω* + infinitive periphrasis take place during the Late Medieval period (LMG) when the final *ν*

of the infinitive *γράφειν* is lost, as a consequence the infinitive and the third person singular are now homophonous (*γράφει*), this leads to a confusion and to a reanalysis of the periphrasis where both verbs, the auxiliary and the main verb, are marked for person and number (3).

- (3) *Θέλω γράφω*

will1.sg write.1sg

At the same time, as the infinitive tends to be substituted by a finite clause, the periphrasis *θέλω να* + finite verb (*θέλω να γράφω*), which used to convey a volitional meaning in the early medieval period, competes now with the *θέλω* + infinitive future clause. Due to the need to distinguish the future meaning from the lexical one, the auxiliary verb *θέλω* freezes in the third person singular *θέλει* (4) (Joseph – Pappas 2002).

- (4) *Θέλει να γράφω*

will.3sg subj. write.1sg

During the Cretan Renaissance (ΚΑ, Κρητική Αναγέννηση) the last relevant grammaticalization stages were registered, the ones which led to the future construction of the modern language (Markopoulos 2007). First, the invariant future auxiliary *θέλει* undergoes phonological reduction as a consequence of fast speech and it becomes *θε να γράφω* (5) (Joseph – Pappas 2002), also losing its morphosyntactic features:

- (5) *Θε να γράφω*

fut. subj. write.1sg

This periphrasis undergoes then assimilation *θε να* → *θα να*, apocope *θα* (*ν*) and elision *θα*. As a result, future tense is expressed by the invariant and monosyllabic future marker *θα* followed by a subjunctive finite verb (Triandafillidis 2002) and it is now completely grammaticalized, as it has lost its morphosyntactic features and phonological content and it has fulfilled the cycle previously described: lexical verb → auxiliary verb → clitic → particle. Not only covers it every grammaticalization stage, but it also fulfills all parameters identified by Kramer (1994), as follows:

- a. The future marker *θα* is morphologically and semantically distinguished from the lexical verb *θέλω*, which is not considered as an auxiliary verb.

- b. The clitic does not conjugate for number and person, it is invariant and monosyllabic.
- c. It is not interpreted as a verb, but as a particle which assimilated the subjunctive marker *va*
- d. It is only possible to interpolate other clitics between the auxiliary and the main verb, such as pronouns in accusative or genitive.
- e. The future marker is also used to express conditional, obligation, epistemic meaning, prediction or inference.

To reach conclusions, the future marker *θα* is fully grammaticalized, as it underwent all stages of grammaticalization, completed the grammaticalization cycle and it fulfills every parameter of grammaticalization.

2.2. The development of periphrastic future in Serbian and Torlakian dialects, from the Old Church Slavonic to the modern language.

The development and grammaticalization of Serbian future can be divided into two main periods: the Old Church Slavonic (IX–XI century AD) since the oldest attestations from Late Proto-Slavic are recorded in this literary language and the Old Serbian (*starosrpski*) (XI–XVIII century AD) .

In Old Church Slavonic (OCS) the future tense was expressed in many ways, as there was not one specific construction to denote it. Like Ancient Greek, it had both a synthetic future, which was expressed by the present tense of the perfective form, and periphrastic constructions. The main auxiliary verbs of these periphrases were, like in Ancient Greek, *xotěti* (to want) and *imati* (to have) + infinitive (Lunt 2001:114), which maintained their lexical meaning but started to acquire a future one (Lunt 2001; Gasparov 2001), this way starting the process of extension.

From the end of X century AD topic macro-dialects develop from Late Proto-Slavic, among which is Serbian. In the first stages of Old Serbian the same future periphrastic constructions as in Old Church Slavonic are used (Grković-Major 2019), until the auxiliary verb *hteti* prevails on the others, it asserts itself as the main auxiliary verb for future construction and through the stages of erosion and desemanticization the verb loses phonetic content and consolidates a

more grammatical meaning. More specifically, the first grammaticalization stage is the phonetic reduction, through which the root of the verb is lost and the verb endings from the conjugation of the verb are maintained, *hoću* → *hću* → *ću* (Grković-Major 2019). Therefore, the future construction is the following: modal clitic marked for person and number + infinitive (*ja ću pisati*).

From the XV century AD through the long head movement phenomenon, a typical phenomenon of South and West Slavic languages (Rivero 1991), the main verb precedes the auxiliary and the latter becomes an enclitic: *će dati* → *dati će*. The ending of the infinitive *-ti* falls and the clitic becomes a suffix still marked for person and number: *daće* (3rd person singular), *писаću* (1st person singular) (Grković-Major 2019).

The last stage Serbian future undergoes, similarly to the other Balkan languages, is the replacement of the infinitive through a finite clause introduced by the subjunctive marker (Mišeska Tomić 2004). As a result, there is now a third future construction: *ja ću da pišem*. These three stages of future periphrasis development do not constitute a gradual evolution, but three alternative future constructions that coexist in the modern language.

To conclude, the grammaticalization cycle is the same as in Greek, and that is lexical verb → auxiliary verb → clitic → affix, but it is important to observe that the process of decategorialization did not take place, as the clitic is still marked for person and number and therefore it has not lost its morphosyntactic features. As a consequence, the future marker did not undergo every grammaticalization stage and it does not cover any grammaticalization parameters, as demonstrated below:

- a. The future marker is not morphologically and semantically distinguished from the lexical verb *hteti*, considered as an auxiliary verb whose enclitics are used to form the future tense. The degree of separation between the future marker and the lexical verb is not complete.
- b. The clitic conjugates for number and person, it is neither invariant nor monosyllabic for the 1st and 2nd person plural (*ćemo, ćete*).
- c. It is still interpreted as a verb, as the subjunctive marker *da* is always present and cannot be omitted. (*ja ću da pišem*)
- d. It is possible to interpolate lexical content between the auxiliary and the main verb, not only pronouns and other enclitics, but also accented words like in the following sentence: *kakvo će vreme biti*

sutra? where the subject *vreme* is between the clitic and the main verb.

- e. The future marker is not used to express conditional, obligation, epistemic meaning, prediction or inference.

Future markers *ću, ćeš, će, ćemo, ćete, će* do not fulfill these parameters of grammaticalization, so one can affirm that full grammaticalization has not been reached yet.

2.3. Grammaticalization of future tense in Torlakian Dialects

Torlakian dialects, also known as Prizren-Timok dialects, as they are spoken in the south-east region of Serbia delimited by the Timok river and the city of Prizren, are considered more “balkanized” than standard Serbian, they share indeed more Balkan features with the other languages of the Sprachbund. As far as future tense is concerned, it has reached a major degree of grammaticalization and undergone some more stages, which cannot be chronologically determined since there aren't any written sources.

The modal clitic of *hteti* is no more marked for person and number, resulting in the use of the invariant 3rd person singular clitic *će* for every grammatical person. The inflected form *ću* for the 1st person singular can be used when the will of the speaker is strongly expressed. Unlike Serbian, both clitics *će* and *ću* (or *če* and *ču*) are not enclitics and therefore they do not need a phonological support of the subject or another accented word and can occupy the first position in the clause. In the Prizren-Timok dialects, as well as in other Balkan languages such as Greek and Bulgarian, infinitive is almost no longer in use, and it is replaced by the subjunctive marker *da* followed by a finite verb. Having said this, future tense is formed by the invariant clitic *će* + *da* + finite verb. The subjunctive marker *da* can also be omitted (1) (Mišeska Tomić 2004, 2006).

- (1) *Će (da) pišem*
fut. (subj) write.1sg
I will write

However, in the negative form the clitic is still marked for person and number, like in standard Serbian (2) (Mirić 2017, 2018) and grammaticalization is still in progress.

- (2) Neću čuvam decu¹
 Neg.fut.1sg look after.1.sg children.
 I will not look after the children

Future marker in Torlakian dialects has reached a major degree of grammaticalization, as it underwent every stage, including decategorialization in the affirmative form, therefore the clitic is a monosyllabic and invariant one, which underwent the same cycle as in Greek and Serbian: lexical verb → auxiliary verb → clitic → particle. However, the interpolation of accented words between the clitic and the main verb is still possible and it denotes that grammaticalization is still in progress (3) (Mirić 2017).

- (3) Kakvo će vreme da bude?
 What like fut. weather subj be.3sg
 What will the weather be like?

The past tense of the clitic *će* followed by a subjunctive construction is used to form the conditional or the future in the past (4) (Mišeska Tomić 2004).

- (4) Ća (da) se vrnem²
 Would.sg.mod.aux (subj) refl.cl come back.1sg
 I would have come back

Whereas, the I-participle of the clitic followed by the present tense of the auxiliary verb *to be* and a subjunctive construction is used to form the future perfect in the past (5) (Mišeska Tomić 2004).

- (5) Ćal sam da ga bijem
 will.M.sg I-part am subj 3.sg.acc.cl. beat.1sg
 I would have beaten him

To conclude, future tense grammaticalization in Prizren-Timok dialects has undergone more stages than Serbian. The 3rd person clitic extended to every person, the use of the clitic to form conditional clauses, the omission of the subjunctive marker denote that grammaticalization has almost been completed.

¹ Examples (2) and (3) are taken from Mirić (2017).

² Examples (4) and (5) are taken from Mišeska Tomić (2004).

Nonetheless, as previously said, it is still in progress in the negative form and as long as lexical content can be interpolated between the clitic and the finite verb, it cannot be considered fully complete like in Greek.

3. Diachronic comparison

The diachronic and parallel comparison of the future tense development both in Greek and in Serbian can be divided into the following phases: the first period between the IX to the XI century, corresponding to the OCS, the ending of the EMG and the beginning of the LMG, the second phase may be identified between the XII and the XV century, corresponding to the LMG and the Old Serbian, the last stage is the Cretan Renaissance from the XVI to the XVII century.

In the first phase a common future construction is identified both in Medieval Greek and in Old Church Slavonic, and that is *will* + infinitive. In both languages this periphrasis undergoes the stage of extension, it begins to convey a future meaning besides the lexical one.

In the second period the future tense development begins to differentiate in the two languages. As previously described, the first stage of grammaticalization in Serbian is the phonetic erosion around the XIII century (hoću → ću). Whereas, in Greek the infinitive loses first its ending *-v* and then it is replaced by a subjunctive construction. The auxiliary verb freezes in the 3rd person singular *θέλει* and the phonetic erosion is the last phase of grammaticalization, which was registered around the XIV century. Contemporarily, the infinitive ending *-ti* in Serbian is lost and the future marker becomes an enclitic added to the root of the verb. The loss of the infinitive ending is a common passage, but it is due to inner factors of the two languages, as Greek lost the final *-v* also in noun and pronoun declensions already in the Hellenistic period (Horrocks 1997), and Serbian lost it when the future clitic became a suffix (Grković-Major 2019), therefore it has nothing to do with language contact.

Only around the XV century the infinitive begins to be replaced by a subjunctive construction in Serbian, too. Probably, this last stage is the result of

language contact in the Balkan peninsula, and it is due to the Greek influence on the other Balkan languages (Banfi 1985).

The main difference of the replacement of the infinitive is that in Serbian both periphrases *ja ću pisati* and *ja ću da pišem* convey the same future meaning, whereas in Greek the use of the infinitive as a main verb expressed a future meaning (*θέλω γράφειν*), until the XV century, and the use of the subjunctive conveyed a lexical meaning (*θέλω να γράφω*) (Markopoulos 2009).

The last grammaticalization stage in Greek, the phonetic erosion, takes place around the XVI century, during the Cretan Renaissance. In Serbian, there is no other development phase. It is important to note that in Greek phonetic erosion concerns the ending of the verb, the root *θε* remains and it is not marked neither for person nor for number, leading to a full grammaticalization of the future marker. In Serbian the root of the auxiliary verb *hteti* is maintained (*ću*), as a consequence of this the morphosyntactic features of the future marker are still present and the grammaticalization has not been completed.

The following tables show the similarities of the future tense development between Greek and Serbian and Greek and Serbian dialects (Table 1 and 2), and the chronology of the future marker development (Table 3 and 4).

Table 1: Common stages of future marker development in Greek and Serbian

Evolution Stage	Greek	Serbian
Will + infinitive	Θέλω γράφειν	Њotěti pisati
Phonetic erosion	Θε να γράφω	Ću pisati
Loss of the infinitive ending	Θέλω γράφει_	Pisa_ću
Replacement of the infinitive	Θέλω να γράφω	Ću da pišem

Table 2: common stages of future marker development in Greek and Torlakian dialects

Evolution stage	Greek	Torlakian
Future marker freezes in the 3rd person	Θέλει να γράφω	Će da pišem
Assimilation/omission of subjunctive marker	Θα γράφω	Će pišem

In the following tables the parallel chronological development is given, as it has been described.

Table 3 shows the stages and the centuries when they took place and table 4 shows how long every future periphrasis was in use.

Greek presents a more complex development of the future periphrasis, which covers a long period of time, there is a sequence of periphrases and every

new one tends to replace the previous one. In Serbian the development and grammaticalization of future tense is simpler and it covers a shorter period of time. Despite the similarities shown in the 1st table, the same stages of grammaticalization in Greek and Serbian took place in different ways and in a different chronological order, as tables 3 and 4 demonstrate, and consequently this led to different grammaticalization degrees in the modern languages.

Table 3: Chronology of future marker evolution in Greek and Serbian

Cent.	Greek	Cent.	Serbian
A. G.	Γράψω Θέλω γράφειν Θέλω γράφω		/
H-R III a.C.- IV d.C.	Θέλω γράφειν FUT. Θέλω ίνα γράφω		
EMG V-X	Θέλω γράφειν	OCS IX- XI	Xotěti pisati
LMG XI XIII	θέλω γράφειν θέλω γράφει_ θέλω γράφω θέλει γράφω θέλω να γράφω θέλει να γράφω	XII XIII XIV	Hoću pisati Hću pisati Ću pisati
XIV XV	θέ να γράφω	XV	pisa-ću ja ću da pišem
KA XVI - XVII	θε να γράφω θα να γράφω θα γράφω	?	Torlak ću/će da pišem ću/će pišem

Table 4: Diachronic comparison of future marker evolution stages in Greek and Serbian

Centuries	H-R	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	XVI	XVII	NOW
Greek											
Θέλω γράφειν											
Θέλω/θέλει γράφω											
Θέλει να γράφω											
Θέλω να γράφω											
Θε να γράφω											
Θα γράφω											
Serbian											
Χοτѐти (hoću) pisati											
Ja ću pisati											
Pisaću											
Ja ću da pišem											

4. Conclusion

This parallel and diachronic comparison of the two grammaticalization processes of future tense in Greek and Serbian demonstrated that both Greek and Serbian future marker underwent a similar development, but with some relevant differences.

Greek future marker is characterized by a more complex future tense development, which started already from Ancient Greek and it continued to evolve until the Cretan Renaissance, when full grammaticalization was reached. The future marker is an invariant and monosyllabic clitic *θα*, which is also used to express conditional, deontic and epistemic meaning.

Serbian future marker underwent fewer grammaticalization stages and its development stopped in the XV century, as a result the clitic is not fully grammaticalized and it does not cover every grammaticalization parameter and did not undergo every grammaticalization stage.

It is considered that this common Balkan feature first developed in Greek (Banfi 1985), as it was already present in Ancient Greek, and then it spread to the other Balkan languages through language contact during the centuries XIII and XV when grammaticalization of *will* future started also in Balkan Slavic (Assenova 2002: 204). That is the period when the Greek

language, as language of the Orthodox Church, played an important and unifying role amongst all orthodox peoples of the Balkan peninsula, who could maintain their ethnic, ideological and religious identity against the conquer of the Ottoman Turks and the Islam (Banfi 1985). It is not a case that the future marker development chronology demonstrates that the most relevant changes and grammaticalization stages took place in the same period in both languages, and that is exactly between XIII and XV century.

The two processes present similarities, like the phonetic erosion, the loss of the infinitive ending and the replacement of the infinitive, as well as differences, the nature of the phonetic erosion and the use of the subjunctive construction. In spite of the common stages, it is relevant to note that Greek has a longer and more complex process, whereas future marker in Serbian underwent fewer changes. As a result of the differences and the different chronological order, grammaticalization has reached two different degrees in the two languages, Greek *θα* being fully grammaticalized and covering every grammaticalization stage and parameter, and Serbian clitics *ću, ćeš, će, ćemo, ćete, će* still being marked for person and number and not covering every grammaticalization stage or parameter.

Future marker in Torlakian dialects presents more similarities to Greek than to Serbian, as it is invariant and monosyllabic, the subjunctive marker *da* is often omitted and it is used also to express conditional. Nonetheless, in the negative form it is still marked for person and number and lexical content may still be interpolated between the clitic and the finite verb, demonstrating that grammaticalization is still in progress.

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UPOREDNA ANALIZA GRAMATIKALIZACIJE BUDUĆEG VREMENA
U GRČKOM I SRPSKOM JEZIKU

REZIME

Rad se bavi gramatikalizacijom analitičkog *velle*-futura u grčkom i srpskom jeziku, koji pripadaju Balkanskoj jezičkoj zajednici. Analiza opisuje i upoređuje razvoj budućeg markera i njegov stepen gramatikalizacije sa dijahronijskog stanovišta, posmatrajući razlike i sličnosti. Najpre, analizira se buduće vreme od starogrčkog do novogrčkog, a zatim se opisuje razvoj futura od staroslovenskog do standardnog srpskog i torlačkih govora. Rezultati analize pokazuju da je gramatikalizacija futura u grčkom potpuna, a u standardnom srpskom i u torlačkim dijalektima još uvek je u toku.

KLJUČNE REČI: Balkanska jezička zajednica, balkanski jezici, analitičko buduće vreme, gramatikalizacija, novogrčki, srpski.

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