

Helmut Wilhelm Schaller¹
(Marburg, Germany)

**FUTURE TENSES IN BULGARIAN AS MORPHO-
SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF THE "BALKANSPRACHBUND"**

Хелмут Вилхелм Шалер

**БЪДЕЩИТЕ ВРЕМЕНА В БЪЛГАРСКИЯ ЕЗИК
КАТО МОРФОСИНТАКТИЧНИ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКИ НА
БАЛКАНСКИЯ ЕЗИКОВ СЪЮЗ**

Abstract: The paper examines the system of future tenses in Bulgarian as part of the morphosyntactic specificities of the Balkansprachbund. A hypothesis is presented that there exists a Balkan center of future tenses – from Byzantine and Modern Greek to Bulgarian (including Macedonian), Serbian and Croatian, up to Slovene, where the future tense is formed by the verb to be. However, Bulgarian has indeed the largest number of future tense paradigms.

Some verb forms in contemporary Bulgarian originate from Old Bulgarian. This is valid for both – synthetic and analytic forms. At the same time, some verb forms result from an influence by other Balkan languages, e.g. the adstrat languages like Balkan Romance or Balkan Greek, and a superstrat language like Turkish.

Резюме: В статията се разглежда системата на бъдещите времена в българския език като част от морфосинтактичните особености на Балканския езиков съюз. Анализира се хипотезата, че съществува балкански център на бъдещи времена – от Византия и съвременния гръцки език през българския език (включително македонския) към сръбския, хърватския и към словенския, където бъдеще време се образува с глагола ‘съм’, но българският език наистина притежава най-големия брой парадигми за бъдеще време. Някои глаголни форми в съвременния български език водят началото си от старобългарския, като това е вярно и за синтетичните, и за аналитичните. Но някои глаголни форми са

¹ schaller@staff.uni-marburg.de

резултат от влиянието на други балкански езици, като адстратните балкански романски или балкански гръцки, както и на суперстратния турски език.

Key words: future tense, Balkansprachbund, Bulgarian language, morphosyntax

Ключови думи: бъдеще време, Балкански езиков съюз, български език, морфосинтаксис

Linguistic areas – “Sprachbünde” – are characterized by many common features in languages which are either grouped or scattered in geographical regions. Balkan Linguistics, as a product of the concept of “Sprachbund” includes languages which are not related, and thus, represent “a grouping of languages” whose affinity is often called “cultural affinity”. The Bulgarian language is one in the genealogical tree of the Indo-European linguistic family that holds an essential position in the Balkan Sprachbund. Although it is one of the oldest languages in the Balkans, its diachronic analysis is rather difficult in spite of its relatively early documentation. However, the place of Bulgarian and its role in the emergence and the evolution of the Balkan Sprachbund is still an open issue.

The origin of the term linguistic area could be associated with the Prague Linguistic Cercle, and especially, with the name of Nikolaj Sergeevič Trubetzkoy (1890–1938). He was the first to launch the idea of the existence of linguistic areas, in German Sprachbund. The linguistic term was first used in 1923, in Russian языковой союз and later it was translated into German. As a term Sprachbund was proposed and later on accepted in the First International Congress of Linguists in The Hague in 1928 in a contribution of Trubetzkoy.

Languages which should be included in the Balkansprachbund are: Albanian, Roumanian, Bulgarian together with Macedonian, these three, being essential languages of the bond, Modern Greek, mainly with its northern dialect and Serbian as a peripheral language within the bond, where the most thorough is Torlashki or that of Prizren-Timok, one of the two large Serbian linguistic zones. This zone is also typologically described as a member of the Balkan Sprachbund.

In a newly published paper about the main tendencies of the development of the Bulgarian morphological system Ilijana Garavalova

writes: “Bulgarian has always been a subject of special interest to linguists due to its marked specifics. Compared with other Slavic languages which are more pronouncedly analytic than old Slavic language and at the same time bear an amazingly archaic trend of them, Bulgarian language definitely stands out with the significant reduction of case system for substantives, rich development of composed verb forms, existence of deterministic name paradigms and many other typical for the Slavic language family distinctive traits” (Garavalova 2016: 101–113).

The linguistic categories “synthetic” and “analytic” as typological characteristics can be referred not only to the nominal but also to the verbal system of Bulgarian language. Synthetic is a language in which the grammatical relationships of words are expressed chiefly through inflection that unite long strings of bound forms into single words, and several concepts are put together into one word, e.g. Latin *am-a-b-or* = I shall be loved. Analytic are languages in which auxiliary words are the chief means of indicating grammatical relationships, to the total and partial exclusion of inflection, and where the separate meanings are expressed by words that can be used in isolation as free morphemes, e.g. English I shall wait, where “I” expresses the notion of first person singular, shall expresses futurity, and “wait” conveys the basic idea of the action, as contrasted with Latin *amabo*, where *ama-* conveys the basic idea, *-b-* expresses futurity and *-o* expresses first person singular. The present time, aorist and imperfect show synthetic characteristics, other verbal categories as there are the future tense, the perfect and plusquamperfect, also the modal category of “Renarrativ” show analytic characteristics with two- and three-membered forms. The description of the Bulgarian verbal system and its typological valuation was the topic of a numerous literature not only in Bulgaria, but also outside in other countries. We have to quote Ljubomir Andrejčin, Stojan Stojanov, Petăr Pašov and Ruselina Nicolova, Kiril Mirčev with his historical view, Vladimir Georgiev and Petja Asenova with a view of Balkan linguistics. Outside of Bulgaria it was Kristian Sandfeld in Denmark, Jurij S. Maslov in Russia, Leon Beaulieux and Jack Feuillet in France who published books with regard of the Bulgarian verbal system. We have to quote also the book of Olga Miseška Tomić with her description of Bulgarian perfect (Tomić 2006). In 2009 the

International Commission of Balkan Linguistics had organized a symposium in Veliko Târnovo on the verbal systems, especially relating to the Balkan linguistic aspects (Glagolnata... 2010).

The majority of the Balkanisms are found not only on the Balkans, but elsewhere in Europe, particularly in the area of Romance languages, but elsewhere as well. So, for example, past future = conditional is found historically at least not only in Romance, but also in English and in Dutch, as well as outside of Europe in Georgian, and is most likely a linguistic universal tendency. Similarly, analytic comparison is the dominant type in Romance. A habeo-perfect is found to a greater or lesser extent in the majority of the non-Slavic languages in Europe. The volo-future, it is true, is found in all the Balkan languages. But in East Balkan Slavic, in Bulgarian and Macedonian it exists alongside a habeo-future, which is also found in Rumanian, Ukrainian and Belorussian. So, in addition to a volo-area, there is an overlapping habeo-area. By restricting the investigation to the Balkan area alone, a form found throughout the delimited area (volo) is given greater significance than a form that extends far further outside the area. (habeo) (Reichenkron 1962: 109).

Proceeding from the time of Old Bulgarian with more than one way indicating futurity, namely with the verbs to will, begin, to have and to be and considering South Slavic languages of today, Bulgarian has a number of different future tense paradigms. Beside the future tense formed with *ще* in Bulgarian we find future tenses in the other Balkan languages. One can assume that there is a Balkan centre of future tenses proceeding from the south to the north, from Byzantine and Modern Greek to Bulgarian including Macedonian, to Serbian and Croatia, up to Slovene, where the future tense is formed by the verb to be. Bulgarian has indeed the largest number of future tense paradigms. Beside the future tense which are formed with *ще*, we find future tenses in the perfect, future tense in the past, future perfect in the past and two evidential tense paradigms. All these paradigms are formed with the verb will (= *ще*) with changeable and unchangeable forms, only the negated future is formed in Bulgarian with *няма да* + verb. There are only a few forms where the verb to be is used in Bulgarian future tenses, e.g. *сях да (бъда) писал*. The Bulgarian system of future tenses is analytic much as the Macedonian system where the future tense is formed by *к'е*, corresponding

to Bulgarian *ще*, but in negated sentences with *нема* + verb, as in Bulgarian. In Serbian and Croatian we find two types of indicating futurity by means of *ht(je)(ti* “to want”, namely an analytic one like *pisat će* and a synthetic one, in Serbian like *pisaću*. But here we find also a second form, the future perfect which is formed with the auxiliary verb *biti* = to be, e.g. *budem došao*. These forms remind us of the future tense in Slovene, which is a South Slavic language, but not a member of “Balkan Sprachbund”, e.g. *bom delal, boš delal* “I/You will do” etc., but correspondent forms of future tenses are to be found also in West and East Slavic languages outside the Balkan area. Only in Ukrainian we find beside future tenses with *budu* “be + Infinitive” as well as synthetic forms with the verb “to have”, e.g. *znatimu*. The difference between synthetic and analytic forms does not seem to be a criterion for Balkan languages, since beside developments of analytism we have also developments towards a new synthetism as in Serbian. We have to compare the South Slavic formations of future tense with Modern Greek *θα ἴραρω* and Albanian *do të shkruaj*. The negation of the future tense in Bulgarian shows two possibilities, namely by preposition of *не* before *ще чета* or by means of *няма да чета*, an analytic formation, which can be conjugated for other persons with *няма да четеш, чете, четем, четете* and *четат*. In Bulgarian we find also forms of future tenses without a negation with the verb *имам*, forms which are tracing back to Old Bulgarian, e.g. *има да страдиш, има да гладуват*. It will be interesting quoting Henrik Birnbaum’s opinion on the paraphrase of future tenses in Old Bulgarian:

“Eines der gemeinsamen Merkmale mehrere heutige Balkansprachen bilden gerade ihre analytischen (bzw. erst sekundär synthetischen) Futura. Die gewöhnlichste Art, das Futur zu bilden, ist hier die Verbindung einer flektierbaren oder erstarrten (partikelhaften) Form des entsprechenden Verbums mit der Bedeutung “wollen” und des Infinitivs, an dessen Stelle dann jedoch früh vielfach eine finite Verbalkonstruktion getreten ist. Daneben begegnet teilweise auch eine Form des Verbums für „haben” als Regens” (Birnbaum 1958: 254).

One can assume that there is a Balkan centre of future tenses proceeding rather from a Greek centre, not a Romanian one, to Bulgarian and Macedonian, and there is a transition area in the formation of future

tenses with Serbian and Croatian up to Slovene in the north with future tenses formed by “to be” as in West and East Slavic languages. The question of future tenses in South Slavic languages, especially in Bulgarian, should be supported by facts of dialectology in all these languages.

By not restricting all these investigations to the narrow bounds of the Balkan Sprachbund, we can place the Balkan languages into a larger context. One of these larger contexts is the general European one. Viewing the Balkan languages in this context, one is struck by the strong typological resemblances between these languages and many of the languages of Western and Central Europe. This should cause us to wonder not why Bulgarian and Macedonian are so different from North Slavic, but rather to wonder why North Slavic is, in general, so un-European (Aronson 2007: 31). The ways in which the linguistic study of the Balkan languages, especially Bulgarian, illustrates various branches of linguistics, and the distinctive contributions that it can make to them, are manifold. So genetic comparative linguistics is traditionally concerned with language families consisting of languages derived from one original dialect-continuum, i.e. related genetically as whole languages, so that this kind of genetic linguistics could be termed as whole language-genetic comparative linguistics, and it applies in principle to all languages.

In Old Bulgarian language we find the simple, non-periphrastic forms of present time with the function of future, imperatif, participium praesentis active and participium praesentis passivi. A special form denoting future was not used, the present time of perfective verbs was used for Greek future forms in translations. But there was also the possibility of paraphrases with auxiliary verbs, e.g. *вѣдѣ* = will be. The periphrastic verbal forms of Old Bulgarian are perfect, plusquamperfect and future tense. The perfect was a syntactic connection of participium praeteriti active with the forms of *быти*. Synthetic future forms, as we find in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Lithuanian show only some remnants in Bulgarian, e.g. the participium *вѣшаште*.

Today we find in Bulgarian 8 tenses, namely present time, aorist, imperfect, perfect, plusquamperfect, future, futurum exactum and futurum praeteriti, which has in Bulgarian an extreme periphery position. The Bulgarian future tenses are embedded in the whole verbal system.

Today we find in Bulgarian absolute and relative tenses, future tenses belong to both spheres:

The absolute tenses relate only to the time of speaking:

1. Present: The action coincides with the time of speech: пиша/Ich schreibe;

2. Aorist, also Prateritum perfectum: The action belongs to the past and is there also finished: писах/Ich schrieb;

3. Perfect, also Prateritum indefinitum: The action belongs to the past and is there also finished, but at the time of speaking it is just actual: писал съм/Ich habe geschrieben;

4. Future: The action begins only after the time of speaking: ще пиша/Ich werde schreiben;

The relative tenses don't relate only to the time of speaking but also to other moments:

1. Imperfect, Praeteritum imperfectum: The action is realized at the time of another action at the same time: пишех/Ich schrieb;

2. Plusquamperfect, Prateritum exactum: The action is realized before another action in the past: бях писал/Ich hatte geschrieben;

3. Futurum praeteriti: The action will be realized after another action in the past: щях да пиша/Ich hätte geschrieben;

4. Futurum exactum: The action is realized before an action in the future: ще съм писал/Ich werde geschrieben haben;

5. Futurum exactum praeteriti: Here one finds two additional tenses in the past, the action is realized before the second action щях да съм писал/Ich werde geschrieben haben sollen.

Formation of the Bulgarian future tense by means of the auxiliary verb “want” in a relic form is present as well in languages out of the Balkans. However, what is impressing concerning the Balkan languages, especially Bulgarian is not only the fact of the existence of this form, but the parallelism in the historical stages of the development of Balkan languages. Except for this, the languages in the Balkans combine both forms of forming the future tense with “want” and “have”, in Bulgarian with ще and нямам also like in Albanian with dua = want and kam = have. It is very important to quote here the paper “Der Typus der Balkansprachen” by Günter Reichenkron:

“Gerade die Umschreibungen mit “wollen” und “haben” zeigen, dass sie an verschiedenen Stellen auftreten können, und dass dann eine von ihnen in einem gewissen, innerlich stark zusammenhängenden und sich gegenseitig beeinflussenden Kulturkreis bevorzugt und verallgemeinert wird. Derartige Umschreibungen sind im Balkanbereich sowohl vom Latein-Altromanischen wie vom Spätgriechisch-Byzantinischen als auch vom Slavischen her zu erklären” (Reichenkron 1962: 109).

In Modern Greek we find three categories of future tenses: *Futurum continuum*, future happening but once (in German: “einmaliges *Futurum*”) und *Futurum exactum*². The origin of the Bulgarian future tenses seems to be Greek, because of the dominant position of Greek language in Bulgaria for a long time³.

Some verbal forms of today Bulgarian without any doubt trace back to Old Bulgarian, this is true for synthetic and analytic verbal forms, but some verbal forms trace back to an influence by other Balkan languages, e.g. adstrat languages like Balkan Romance or Balkan Greek, or also a superstrat language like Turkish. The well-known Bulgarian balkanologist Ivan Duridanov assumed that for a long period the decisive factor was the opposition of two opposite tendencies, namely a synthetic and an analytic one, playing a role in different periods of the history of

² Vgl. hierzu Maria Moser-Philtsov: *Lehrbuch der neugriechischen Volkssprache*. München 1972. 5 ed. p. 87.

„Das *Futurum continuum* bezeichnet die Dauer oder Wiederholung einer Handlung oder die Dauer eines Zustandes in der Zukunft, also einen zeitlich nicht abgeschlossenen Verlauf einer Handlung”.

Idem., p. 87: „Das einmalige *Futurum* bezeichnet eine einmalige Handlung in der Zukunft oder ein als etwa Ganzes, Einmaliges angesehene Handlung. Der Unterschied zwischen beiden Futura ist der gleiche wie zwischen dem Imperfekt und Aorist”.

³ Compare also J.Sedláček: *Parallel phenomena in the development of the languages of southeastern Europe*. In: *Les Études Balkaniques Tchecoslovaques II*, 1967, p. 25.

“Such a debatable case is the question of a descriptive future of the Balkan type formed by means of the auxiliary “to want”. The quick expansion of this future over a comparatively vast area suggests that in this case it is not only the influence of Greek but also the parallel development in which the Latin-Roman lingual factor appears”.

Bulgarian language (Duridanov 1955: 109). Considering the Bulgarian language today with its analytic tendencies as a dominant feature of the development, one can also realize new synthetic tendencies in this language as the verbal system of Bulgarian shows us (Schaller 1974/75, 1999).

Дуриданов 1955: Дуриданов, Ив. Към проблемата за развоя на българския език от синтетизъм към аналитизъм. // *Год. СУ „Св. Кл. Охридски“*. Филолог. фак., 51, 1955, (1956), № 1, 85–272. **Duridanov 1955:** Duridanov, Iv. Kam problemata za razvoja na balgarskiya ezik ot sintetizam kam analitizam. // *God. SU “Sv. Kl. Ohridski”*. Filolog. fak., 51, 1955, (1956), № 1, 85–272.

Aronson 2007: Aronson, H. I. *The Balkan Linguistic League, “Orientalism”, and Linguistic Typology*. Ann Arbor New York.

Birnbaum 1958: Birnbaum, H. *Untersuchungen zu den Zukunftsbeschreibungen mit dem Infinitiv im Altkirchenslavischen*. Stockholm.

Garavalova 2016: Garavalova, I. Main trends in the Development of Bulgarian Morphological system. In: *Linguistique Balkanique* LV, H.1, pp. 101–113.

Glagolnata... 2010: *Glagolnata sistema na balkanskite ezici – nasledstvo i neologija/The verbal System of the Balkan Languages – Heritage and Neology*. Veliko Tarnovo.

Moser-Philtsov 1972: Moser-Philtsov, M. *Lehrbuch der neugriechischen Volkssprache*. München.

Reichenkron 1962: Reichenkron, G. Der Typus der Balkansprachen. In: *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 1.

Schaller 1974/75: Schaller, H. W. Synthetische und analytische Flexion in den slavischen Sprachen. Eine Betrachtung aus der Sicht des Slavischen und der Balkansprachen. In: *Die Welt der Slaven* A.F. 19/20, pp. 124–141.

Schaller 1999: Schaller, H. W. Überlegungen zur Entwicklung des Bulgarischen vom Synthetismus zum Analytismus. In: *Ars Philologica*. Festschrift für Baldur Panzer zum 65. Geburtstag. Frankfurt a.M., pp. 335–362.

Sedláček 1967: Sedláček, J. Parallel phenomena in the development of the languages of southeastern Europe. In: *Les Études Balkaniques Tchécoslovaques* II.

Tomić 2006: Tomić, O. M. *Balkan Sprachbund. Morpho-syntactic Features*. Dordrecht.