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TOWARDS A COMPARISON OF CONDITIONALS IN BULGARIAN, MACEDONIAN AND ALBANIAN

A study of conditional sentences in Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Albanian must examine not only the interaction of particles plus verb forms and the different meanings which those forms convey, but it must also examine changing norms and differences between colloquial and written styles since within the modal systems of these three languages, conditional sentences seem particularly subject to change. The current work does not attempt to provide an exhaustive study of conditionals; rather, my goal is to offer a framework for analysing and comparing conditional sentences, to point to preliminary findings of such a comparison and to point to directions of future research. In comparing conditional sentences in Bulgarian and Macedonian special attention is given to the use of *bi* since it is here that changing norms are most evident. More detailed research is needed on the formation of conditional sentences in Albanian, therefore, only initial findings will be presented here.

Data for this paper were taken from the novels *Baj Ganjo* (henceforth designated BG), originally written in Bulgarian by Aleko Konstantinov and translated into Macedonian and Albanian, and the Russian novel *Sud'ba Čeloveka* (henceforth designated SC), 'The Fate of Man' by Sholokhov translated into Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Albanian¹. These two works were chosen because they contain a great deal of conversation and offer, therefore, the chance to examine both informal, colloquial speech and more formal narrative.

Throughout this paper the terms *expectative*, *hypothetical*, *fulfillable*, and *unfulfillable* will be used as follows:

1) **Unfulfillable expectative conditions** are those conditions which could or should have been fulfilled at some point in the past but which were not fulfilled. In both Macedonian and Bulgarian these conditions are usually formed with *ako* or *da* plus non-past in the protasis, i.e. the if-clause and *kelšte* plus the so-called future-in-the-past in the apodosis, i.e. the then-clause. In Albanian these conditionals are usually formed with *po* or *sikur* 'if' plus an imperfect subjunctive or past perfect subjunctive in the protasis and a past conditional composed of *do* plus a past perfect subjunctive in the apodosis. The following examples show these correspondances:

1. M. *Ako ne beše gospodin Vasilaki da im gi zamačka očite, nie sosema ke se posramevme.*
(BG 38)

¹ Page numbers in the citations refer to the editions of the texts cited in the bibliography. Macedonian, Bulgarian and Albanian will be abbreviated respectively as M, B, and A.

B. *Ako ne beše gospodin Vasilaki da im pozamaže oči, nij sūvsem štajxme da se provalim*
(BG 194)

A. *Po të mos qe* [instead of literary norm *të ishe*] *zoti Vasillaqi t'u zinte një çikë sytë, ne do ta kishim humbur fare nga turpi.*
(BG 46)

If Mr. Vasilaki hadn't been there to distract them, we would have totally disgraced ourselves.

2. M. *Da ni beše kolipkata na drugo mesto, možebi i životot ke beše poinakov.*
(SC 10)

B. *Da beše kolibkata mi drugde, može bi i životot šteše da potūrqnë inače.*
(SC 15)

A. *Pa ta kishite nqritur kasollen në ndonjë vend tjetër, ndofta jeta ime do të kish qenë ndryshe.*
(SC 14)

If our cottage had been in a different place, perhaps life would have turned out differently.

II) **Unfulfillable hypothetical conditions**² are those in which a condition is expressed with a present tense verb to express an action which cannot be fulfilled at the moment of speech. In Macedonian and Bulgarian these conditions are expressed with *da* followed by an imperfective non-past or an imperfective imperfect in the protasis and *ke/šte* plus imperfect or *bi* plus L-form in the apodosis, e.g.:

4. M. *Da znam nekoj drug zbor, ke go rečev nego.*

If I knew/lit. know/some other word I would say it.

5. B. *Da sum na negovo mjesto, az ne bix ja ostavil da živee samička u Plovdiv.* (Maslov 1981:398 cited in Sell, 1985)
If I were / lit. am/ in his place, I would not let her live alone in Plovdiv.

III) **Fulfillable expectative conditions** are those in which a condition is expressed as a future possibility. The speaker does not cast doubt on the fulfillment of the condition. In both Macedonian and Bulgarian such conditions are most commonly formed with *ako* or *da* plus non-past in the protasis and *ke/šte* plus non-past in the apodosis. In Albanian the most usual formation is *po/sikur* plus present subjunctive in the protasis and *do* plus present subjunctive in the apodosis, e.g.:

6. M. *Zabite ke vi gi iskršam, ako ne go izberete Baj Ganjo.*
(BG 15)

B. *Zubite vi šte razkūrtja, ako ne izberete baj Ganja.*
(BG 260)

A. *Do t'ju çkul dnëmbët një nga një, po të mos zgidhni baj Ganon.*
(BG 119)

I'll smash your teeth if you don't select baj Ganjo.

² No such examples were found in the comparative texts. Albanian would not use a present tense in this context but would use *po* plus an imperfect subjunctive in the protasis and a conditional in the apodosis, e.g.: *Unë po të isha në vendin tënd, këshni do të çuditesha.* 'If I were in your place I would be amazed.'

IV) **Finally, fulfillable hypothetical conditions** are those in which the condition is conceivably fulfillable, but which the speaker presents as doubtful, unlikely, or hypothetical. They give the speaker's view that a future condition, while possibly fulfillable, may remain unfulfilled. In Bulgarian and Macedonian the most usual formation of these conditions is *ako/da* in the protasis and *bi* in the apodosis or *ako bi* in the protasis and *ke* plus non-past in the apodosis. In the latter formation, *bi* is not needed in the apodosis since the hypotheticalness of the condition has already been expressed in the protasis. In Albanian these conditions are usually formed with *po/sikur* plus an imperfect subjunctive in the protasis and a conditional */ do* plus imperfect subjunctive/ in the apodosis, e.g.:

7. M. Grandissimo maestro Verdi! *Ti nemaš, ti ne možeš da imaš neprijatelji! No ako pokraj očekuvanjetu bi se javil nekoj izrod, toj ke bide samiot Satana.*

(BG 73)

B. Grandissimo maestro Verdi! *Ti njamaš, ti ne može da imaš vragove! No ako, pače čajanija, bi se javil njakoj izrod, toj šte bŭde samijut satana.*

(BG 224)

A. Grandissimo maestro Verdi! *Ti s'ke dhe mund të kesh armiq. Po sikur të dilte ndonjë i kesaj fare, ky do të qe pa tjetër vetë djalli.*

(BG 80).

Great maestro Verdi! You don't have, you can't have enemies! But if unexpectedly some sort of monster did appear it would be Satan himself.

A summary of the most usual correspondances of particle and verb form as outlined above, are summarized in Table One:

Unfulfillable Expectative

	Protasis	Apodosis
M	<i>ako/da</i> + past	<i>ke</i> + imperfect; <i>bi</i> + L-form
B	<i>ako/da/ako da</i> + past	<i>šte</i> + imperfect; <i>bi</i> + L-form
A	<i>po/sikur</i> + imperfect subjunc. pas/perfect subjunc.	<i>do</i> + pas perfect subjunc.

Unfulfillable Hypothetical

M	<i>da</i> + imperfective non-past/ imperfect	<i>ke</i> + imperf.; <i>bi</i> + L-form
B	<i>da</i> + imperfective non-past/ imperfect	<i>šte</i> + imperf.; <i>bi</i> + L-form
A	<i>po</i> + imperfect subjunctive	<i>do</i> + imperf. subjunctive (i.e. conditional)

Fulfillable Expectative

M	<i>ako/da</i> + non-past	<i>ke</i> + non-past
B	<i>ako/da</i> + non-past	<i>šte</i> + non-past
A	<i>po/sikur</i> + pres. subjunc.	<i>do</i> + pres. subjunc.

Fulfillable Hypothetical

M	ako/da + non-past ako bi + L-form	bi + L-form ke + non-past
B	ako/da + non-past ako bi + I-form	bi + L-form šte + non-past
A	po/sikur + imperf. subj.	do + imperf. subj. (conditional)

When we look at Bulgarian and Macedonian conditions in more detail, differences in the formation of conditional sentences in the two languages rest largely on the selection of particle in the protasis and apodosis. Looking first at the protasis – Macedonian generally employs the particle *da* in the protasis of unfulfillable conditions and *ako*, *li* and *dokolku* in the protasis of fulfillable conditions. The Academy Grammar of Bulgarian states that in Bulgarian, too, *da* is used most frequently in unfulfillable conditions, and *ako* in fulfillable.

In Macedonian and Bulgarian *ako* is the commonly used conditional particle in the protasis of fulfillable conditions. Macedonian *li* and *dokolku* have more restricted use in fulfillable conditions. The independent use of *li* without *ako* is disappearing; informants consider its use archaic or substandard. In Bulgarian, however, none of the basic handbooks designate the use of *li* as archaic or as stylistically marked in examples such as the following:

12. B. Otide li vŭv Vena, toj šte se spre v xotel „London“.
(BG 217)
M. Ako projde vo Viena, ke odi v xotel „London“.
(BG 65)
If he went to Vienna, he would go to the hotel London.
13. B. Za tŭrgovija li otiva, šte ide pri Bŭlgarite tŭrgovtsi.
(BG 217)
M. Ako odi po tŭgovija ke pojde kaj tŭgovtsite Bulgari.
(BG 66)
If he went for business, he would go to the Bulgarian merchants.

The Macedonian particle *dokolku*, a calque on Serbian *ukoliko* 'insofar as' is gaining ground particularly in journalistic prose in the expression of an expected condition. The Bulgarian *dokolkoto* 'insofar as', e.g. *Dokolkoto moga . . .* 'Insofar as I am able' is not used in the protasis of conditional sentences.

In Albanian *sikur/po* seem to be in free variation. In the examples collected here *po* was used most often in both fulfillable and unfulfillable conditions though *sikur* and *did* also occur. In iterative conditions, like example thirteen above, Albanian did not use a subjunctive, but *kur* 'when' plus an imperfect:

Kur shkonte në Vienë, ai qëndronte në hotel „London“.
Kur shkonte gjëkund për tregëti takohej vetëme me tregëtorë
bullgarë.
(BG 73)

While more data must be compared, a preliminary comparison of Bulgarian and Macedonian shows a tendency for Bulgarian to use *ako* more frequently than Macedonian in the protasis of unfulfillable expectative conditions. Well over 2/3 of the conditions of this type collected here had Macedonian *da* but Bulgarian *ako*. In other words, Macedonian tends to make a sharper distinction between the use of *da* and *ako*, *ako* for fulfillable conditions and iterative conditions such as example 13 above, *da* for unfulfillable conditions, compare, for example:

14. M. *Da znaeše deka negovata pcosta samo nŭ pravi zadovolstvo – toj ne bi ne pcujel po ruski, tuku samo na svojot jazik.*
(SC 21)
B. *Ako znaeše, če rugatnjata mu ni dostavja samo udovolstvie, toj njamaše da pcuva po ruski, a na svoja ezik.*
(SC 31)
If he knew that his swearing only gave us pleasure, he would not have sworn in Russian, but only in his own language.
15. M. *Da se pikneše nekoe morski čudovište vo toj moment vo sobata na našite sobesednici, teško ke možeše da go zgolemi porazitelniot vpečatok što go proizvedoa poslednite zborovi na baj Ganjo.*
(BG 146)
B. *Ako njakoe morski čudovište se umŭknese v onzi moment v stajata na našite sŭbesednici, to edva li bi moglo da uveliči poražajušteto vpečatlenie, koeto proizvedoxa poslednite dumi na baj Ganja.*
(BG 286)
If a sea monster had at that moment sneaked into our friends' room it would have been difficult for it to increase the stunning impression which Baj Ganjo's last words produced.

When we turn to the expression of the apodosis we find a similar development in both Bulgarian and Macedonian.³ Changes in both languages concern the distribution in the apodosis of *ke/šte* plus imperfect or *bi* plus I-form. In the remainder of this paper we will focus on the use of *bi* and *ke/šte* in the apodosis of conditional sentences and the independent use of *bi*. Special attention must be given to these forms since it seems that it is here that the modal systems are changing most rapidly. As we will see below, *bi* is being used more widely in both Bulgarian and Macedonian, occurring in environments where the so-called future in the past, i.e. *ke/šte* plus perfective imperfect has been used.

³ It should be noted here that the so-called new Bulgarian conditional cited by Mateer and also in Bulgarian Academy Grammar composed of verbs suffixed with *-vam*, *-jam* or *-am* used in the apodosis in place of constructions with *bi*, e.g.

Kupuvam 'go, ako mi go dadat na izvodna cena.

bix kupil 'go, ako mi go dadat na izvodna cena.

I would buy it if thy gave it to me at a good (favourable) price.

has no counterpart in Macedonian and is considered by the Bulgarian Academy Grammar to be colloquial and non-literary, therefore we will not treat such constructions here.

In both Bulgarian and Macedonian *bi* is said to express 1) a hypothetical condition, i.e. one marked for doubt, etc. 2) a hypothetical future action outside of a conditional sentence, e.g. *bi sakala* edno kafence. I would like a cup of coffee.

Golab noted that the basic problem in the syntactic distribution of the moods in Bulgarian and Macedonian concerns the relationship between the conditional, i.e. *ke/šte* and the potential /i.e. hypothetical/ *bi*, because, as he points out, the forms may be exchanged in some positions. Specifically, there is a neutralization of the opposition in the apodosis of irreal, i.e. past conditions. Golab states, the difference between Macedonian:

16. Da dojdete porano, ke ja gledavte priredbata.

bi ste ja gledale priredbata.

If you had come earlier you would have seen the show.
is one of style, *bi* representing a more formal style.

The difference between *bi* and *ke/šte* is most clearly seen in the apodosis of a fulfillable condition where they may not be exchanged without changing meaning from expected to hypothetical. As we have shown above, *ke/šte* designates an expectative action, *bi* designates a hypothetical action, cf.

Ako mi se javite ke dojdam

If you call me I will come.

Ako mi se javite bi došla.

If you were to call me I would come.

It is clear that the apodosis of a past unfulfillable condition is the primary position for the neutralization of *bi* and *ke/šte*, and therefore for the spread of *bi* since in a past context no distinction is made as to the degree of possibility that a condition would or could have been fulfilled in the past. Given that we have a similar phenomenon in both languages, i.e. the spread of *bi* to the apodosis of past conditions, the following questions arise, do Bulgarian and Macedonian make a clear distinction in style between *bi* and *ke/šte*, is there any way to predict which particle will be used, and finally, what is the relationship between Bulgarian and Macedonian in the use of *bi* outside of a conditional period.

From this preliminary comparison of Bulgarian and Macedonian data the following is evident. First, as expected a clear opposition is maintained between the use of *ke/šte* and *bi* in fulfillable conditions. The Bulgarian and Macedonian texts were consistent with one another in the selection of particle in this context as in egs. 6. and 7. above.

In hypothetical statements outside of conditions there was usually a correspondance in the use of Bulgarian and Macedonian *bi*, e.g.:

17. M. Taka gi iskrivi očite, što čovek od sproti nego bi mu gi videl samo belkite...

(BG 104)

B. Taka si izkrivi nadjasno očite, štoto čovek nasrešta mu bi vidjal samo belučite im..

(BG 250)

He moved his eyes so far to the right, that a person opposite him would see only the whites.

18. M. Edniot došel od Bugarija, drugiut živeel po Evropa, sekako bi imalo što da zboruvaat, bidejki se treba da ima nekoja razlika megu zapad i našata tatkovina.

(BG 65)

B. Ednijut došel ot Bŭlgarija, drugiut živjal v Evropa, vse bi imalo kakvo da poprikazvat, poneže vse trjabva da ima njakoj razlika mežu Zapada i našata tatkovina.

(BG 217)

One had come from Bulgaria, the other lived in Europe, there must have been something to talk about, since there must be some difference between the west and our country.

There was a tendency in the Macedonian translations to use *bi* more frequently for stylistic effect, for a more formal style, than occurred in the Bulgarian text. In numerous cases Macedonian used *bi* where a different type of expression occurred in the Bulgarian texts. The Albanian texts used an imperfect e.g.:

19. M. Gledam, dečinjata moi mi mavtaat, bi sakale da se nasmevnaat a ne im uspeva.

(SC 11)

B. Gledam, dečicata mi...maxat mi s rŭče, iskat da mi se usmixnat, no ništo ne izliza.

(SC 17)

A. Ishin mbledhor grumbull si jetime, tundnin duart, mendoheshin të yinin buzën në guz, po nuk je dilnin dot.

(SC 16)

I look, my children wave at me with their hands, they want/ would like to smile, but they can't.

20. M. Baj Ganjo sostavuvawe v um edna rečenica na germanski što bi trebalo da odgovara na našeto: kade e ona za golemata rabota?

(BG 60)

B. Baj Ganjo sŭčinjavaše v uma si edna fraza po nemski, kojato da otgovarja na našeto...de e onova za goljama rabota?

(BG 213)

A. Baj Gano po formonte në mëndje një frazë gjermanisht që, simbas tij, kishte këtë kuptim në gjuhën tonë: ku është ai vëndi për nevojën e madhe?

(BG 68)

Baj Ganjo composed in his mind a sentence which would correspond to our: Where is the thing for a big job [i.e. number two]?

No examples were found in the comparative texts expressing a polite command, but from the handbooks it would appear that the use here of *bi* is fairly consistent.

As expected, most differences were found in the apodosis of unfulfillable conditions. While in the majority of cases where there was a discrepancy in the use of *bi* or *ke/šte* between the texts, Macedonian had *bi* where Bulgarian had *šte*. While we may conclude that *bi* is perhaps used more freely in Macedonian than in Bulgarian both in the apodosis of unfulfillable

conditions and outside of conditionals, it must be stated here that perhaps the most interesting finding when comparing the texts is that the Bulgarian and Macedonian texts corresponded in particle choice in both protasis and apodosis in only twenty per cent of the examples. While both Bulgarian and Macedonian used *bi* in the apodosis of unfulfillable conditions, they did so in different sentences. Where Macedonian used *da - bi*, Bulgarian used *ako - šte*, in examples where Macedonian used *da - ke*, Bulgarian used *da - bi*. It is clear from this sample that while the languages are changing in similar ways, the speed of that change is not the same nor always in the same direction.

Further work must be done comparing conditionals in Bulgarian and Macedonian. This preliminary research shows, however, that similar distinctions are made in the two languages, i.e. that *bi* and *ke/šte* are distinct in fulfillable conditions, but not in unfulfillable conditions, *bi* is used in both languages to express hypotheticalness outside of conditional sentences, but Macedonian seems to use *bi* more freely, and finally, there is a tendency for *bi* to be used in the apodosis of unfulfillable conditions in place of *ke/šte* but there is not a one to one correspondance in usage. The choice of particle in the protasis is also worthy of more study, in particular what if any is the reason for differences in the choice of *da* or *ako*.

I have only just started to analyze conditional sentences in Albanian, therefore, little has been said about those conditions here. What appears to be the most fruitful area for comparative research is the relationship between the Albanian conditional, i.e. constructions with *do* plus imperfect or pastperfect subjunctive and Bulgarian and Macedonian *bi*. This shall become the topic of future research.

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