Chapter Six

INFINITIVES AND SUBJUNCTIVES

The most perspicuous and most widely discussed feature of the Balkan Sprachbund languages is the loss of the infinitive and its replacement by structurally comparable subjunctive constructions. It should, however, be pointed out that there is no uniformity in either the loss of the infinitive or its replacement by subjunctive constructions. The infinitive has been completely lost in Macedonian, Modern Greek and Arli Balkan Romani and almost completely in Bulgarian, Aromanian and the South-Eastern Serbian dialects. In Megleno-Romanian, it shows up in a limited number of constructions, while in Standard Serbian and Standard Croatian, and to some degree in Romanian, it survives, though many of its uses are shared by subjunctive constructions. As for Albanian, it is not quite clear whether the Indo-European infinitive was lost at one point and reintroduced atypically (with devices that are distinct from the common Indo-European devices) prior to the publication of the first Albanian written document – Buzuku’s Missal, published in 1555, or else the Albanian quasi-infinitival constructions are not related to infinitives at all (cf. Demiraj 1969:89; Joseph 1983).¹

The loss of the infinitive and its replacement by subjunctive constructions was gradual. Since in Greek this replacement began to occur earlier than in other Balkan languages, it is often assumed that the replacement in the other Balkan languages occurred under the influence of Greek (cf. Asenova 2002:196).

In Ancient Greek, tensed nominal clauses, introduced by a variety of complementizers, occurred alongside the infinitive. In Biblical Greek texts written since the 7th century, the use of the infinitive decreases (cf. Hatzidakis 1892:214-215), and in the late Byzantine period (1100-1453) it appears only in future tense constructions (cf. Browning 1969:83), to be completely ousted out of the grammar of the language after that period. The loss of the infinitive in Modern Greek is ascribed to the fact that, in addition to the general functions of the Indo-European infinitive, it had secondary functions, such as expressing anteriority or posteriority, which enabled infinitives to be used interchangeably with finite clauses introduced by τὸν, from which the Modern Greek subjunctive marker has developed. (cf. Kurcová 1966).

According to Joseph (1983) the loss of the infinitive in Balkan Slavic was influenced by Greek. Mitrović (1937:22), however, argues that the replacement of the infinitive by subjunctive constructions in Old Church Slavonic is in contrast with the fact that some of the infinitives in the Greek originals in the Bible were translated into Old Church Slavonic by finite clauses introduced by the complementizer da, which shows that the uses of the infinitive and the subjunctive in Greek and Old Church Slavonic differed. One has to bear in mind, however, that the uses of the infinitive and the subjunctive in Old Church Slavonic were not clearly differentiated. In any case, in the early translations of the Bible into Old Church Slavonic (10th and 11th century) infinitival constructions are used alongside nominal clauses introduced by the subordinator da ‘that’.² Subsequently, in the

¹ Joseph’s (1983) argument can be summarized as follows: The IE infinitive, to the extent that it can be reconstructed, appears to have been a case form of a nominal derivative of a verbal root. Neither the Geg Albanian infinitival constructions, nor the (Tosk) Albanian përmët simultaneously participial construction fit into the reconstructed IE infinitival system, especially since the suffixes used in the major verbal part of the infinitive in Albanian continue IE suffixes that were properly participial/adjectival (Tosk Albanian -mët/-ët < IE *-mo; Geg Albanian -mët < IE *-mo). Moreover, in Buzuku’s Missal, infinitival (Geg) constructions are quite frequent, while in the writings of many other Balkan languages of the time (16th century) the infinitive is rarely used, if at all.

² Krapova (2001:109) notes that subjunctive structures were first of all introduced in clauses that required distinct subjects (i) and in ECM (Exceptional Case Marking) clauses (ii):
Balkan Slavic spoken in the areas in which at the present Bulgarian and Macedonian are spoken, the infinitive lost its infinitival suffix and appeared in a “short form” (Asenova 2002:143). From the 16th century onwards, in the South Slavic spoken to the south and east of the Serbian river Timok, the infinitive appeared productively only in future tense constructions, from which it has subsequently also been ousted out by subjunctive clauses.3

In the earliest (16th century) Romanian texts, the full (suffixal) infinitive was functioning as a verbal noun, as it does in contemporary Romanian and Aromanian, as well as a “proper” infinitive (Rosetti 1964:98). Subsequently, the function of the “proper” infinitive was relegated to the short (suffixless) infinitive,4 which according to Asenova (2002:146), is a Slavic influence, while the use of the full infinitival form is strictly nominal.

Whatever the degree of loss of the infinitive, in all the Balkan languages it has been replaced by analogous constructions – indicative and subjunctive clauses, which have parallel structures with respect to (a) subordinators – “that”-complementizers and subjunctive markers, respectively,5 (b) ordering of clitics and negation markers and (c) in some languages, choice of negation markers and verbal morphology.6

In all the languages of the Sprachbund, subjunctive clauses are basically used in analogous environments – most notably (a) in the formation of future tenses with expectative (“will”) and

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\begin{align*}
(i) & \quad \text{Ašte hoštom da tu prevondets... (Old Church Slavonic)} \\
& \quad \text{if want.1Sg Subj.Mark he survive.3Sg} \\
& \quad \text{‘If I want him to survive...’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
(ii) & \quad \text{Ne hoštema semu da caruets nads nami.} \\
& \quad \text{not want.1PI him Subj.Mark rule.3Sg above us} \\
& \quad \text{‘We don’t want him to govern us.’}
\end{align*}
\]

As pointed out by Asenova (2002:198) this is due to the fact that the infinitive is modally neutral. When the modality of the complement cannot be deduced from the modality of the main clause, a finite complement is more desirable. In fact, as pointed out by Asenova (2002:198) this is due to the fact that the infinitive is modally neutral. When the modality of ‘We don’t want him to govern us.’ This fact, and the modal nature of the subjunctive marker, have prompted generative analyses in which the subjunctive markers are derived in nodes distinct from C, where the indicative complementizers are derived. According to Krapova (2001:105), who refers to Phillipaki-Warburton (1987), Rivero (1995) and Terzi (1992), there is a widely held view in current Modern Greek studies that the subjunctive marker does not exhibit complementizer properties. Joseph and Phillipaki-Warburton (1987) treat the Modern Greek subjunctive marker as a verbal particle, Rudin (1985, 1987) derives the Bulgarian subjunctive marker under the Aux node, Terzi (1992) and Motapanyan (1991) treat the Modern Greek and Romanian subjunctive markers as independent modal heads, and Rivero (1994) treats analogously the Bulgarian, Albanian, Modern Greek and Romanian subjunctive markers. Note, however, that the head in which the Balkan subjunctive markers are derived should be distinguished from the head in which the modal markers that participate in the formation of the Balkan future tenses are derived. In Tomić (2004a, to appear c, 2005b) the subjunctive markers are derived in mood nodes to the right of the modality node, where the modal clitics are derived.

5 In Modern Greek, Albanian and Arli Balkan Romani, subjunctives select negation markers which are distinct from the negation markers selected by indicatives, and occur in other non-finite constructions. Albanian has distinct subjunctive forms for 2nd and 3rd person singular, while Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian have a distinct common subjunctive forms for 3rd person singular and plural.