

Future orientation in adverbial time clauses in the Balkan languages

Ekaterina Tarpomanova
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
tochitsaaa@gmail.com

Biliana Mihaylova
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
bilydim@gmail.com

Marina Dzhonova
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
mdjonova@gmail.com

Time clauses are a type of dependent adverbial clauses that describe events that are anterior, posterior or simultaneous to the event in the main clause. They are typically fronted by the subordinator ‘where’, but also by other subordinators. The topic of this study are the time clauses with future orientation in the languages of the Balkan Sprachbund (Bulgarian, Greek, Albanian and Romanian). There are two models to express a future-oriented event in an adverbial time clause: by a present-tense and a future-tense verb form, the latter being ungrammatical in English (as well as in many Indo-European languages):

- (1) *John will come when Mary leaves.*
- (2) * *John will come when Mary will leave.*

In the first model the future orientation is not morphologically marked and the future reading of the dependent clause is provided by the main clause in which the event is described as not having happened yet (expressed by future tense, imperative or modal verb).

The second model, in which there is an explicit marking of the future orientation, is typical for the Balkan languages, except for Bulgarian. In Greek, Albanian and Romanian the future particle is optional so future orientation of the dependent time clause can be expressed both by present or future verb forms. Nevertheless, the future model seems quite frequent, especially in colloquial speech.

- (3) *Kur do të vish, do të bisedojmë shtruar për të gjitha.*
‘When you come, we will discuss everything in details.’
- (4) *Όταν θα λάβεις αυτό το γράμμα, εγώ θα είμαι πολύ μακριά.*
‘When you take this letter, I will be far away.’
- (5) *Când vei veni, vom învăța unul de la celălalt.*
‘When you come, we will learn from each other.’

Bulgarian does not follow the “Balkan” model: similarly to English, only present tense is possible in this type of dependent clauses, of both perfective and imperfective verbs. The hypothesis that future orientation is related to perfective aspect as a Slavic feature in Bulgarian (cf. Ivanchev 1971, about future orientation of ‘until’-clauses: Penchev 2001) is not confirmed by the corpus material. The examples below show that the time clauses with perfective and imperfective verb differ in terms of event type, but not in terms of orientation:

- (7) *Koγato doῦdeu, ue tu pazkaʒa.*
‘I will tell you when you come.’
- (8) *Koγato uδvau, ue yδeu tʒk.*
‘(Every time) you come, you will eat here.’

Time clauses introduced by ‘when’ are similar to adverbial condition clauses and can be easily transformed in such clauses: *I’ll tell you when you come.* > *I’ll tell you if you come.* In the Balkan languages they have the same characteristics with respect to temporal orientation. ‘When’-clauses can be compared with other wh-clauses in which the usage of future marker is more limited, according to the preliminary observations.

The language examples are excerpted from the following corpora:

Bulgarian National Corpus (BulNC), available at: search.dcl.bas.bg

Corpusul de referință pentru limba română contemporană (CoRoLa), available at: corola.racai.ro

Albanian National Corpus, available at: <http://web-corpora.net/AlbanianCorpus/search/>

Corpus of Modern Greek, available at: <http://web-corpora.net/GreekCorpus/search/>

Parallel corpora of BulNC (not available online)

References

Ivanchev 1971: Иванчев, Св. *Проблеми на аспектуалността в славянските езици*. София: БАН, 1971.

Penchev 2001: Пенчев, Й. Вид и време в една въпросителна конструкция. – *Списание на БАН*, кн. 2, 2001, 39–40.