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A Problem in Grammatical Invariance  
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One of the principle assumptions of structuralist linguistic theory is the invariant meaning of grammatical categories, i.e. if a form is marked for a given category, then that form will always convey the meaning of that category. The admirative use of the Macedonian past indefinite (minato neopredeleno vreme) poses a problem for the concept of invariance, and while Darden's (1977) explanation of a similar phenomenon in Bulgarian appears to be relevant for Macedonian, there are additional facts for which it does not account and which have not been previously noted.

In Macedonian, the admirative is a use of the past indefinite to express surprise upon viewing or becoming aware of an event or fact concurrent with the speech event, i.e. a form which is marked for the category past tense is used with an apparently nonpast meaning--in contradiction to the principle of grammatical invariance:

- (1) Ti si bil Rom!  
Why, you are a Gypsy!
- (2) Lele, što ubavo mi jadelo momičeto!  
My, my, how beautifully my little girl eats!
- (3) Vrnelo!  
It's raining!

The explanation based on Darden's argument would be the following: The past indefinite, which is unmarked with respect to the other past tense forms (Friedman 1976), has reportedness as its chief contextual variant meaning. In such uses, the past indefinite verb form can be said to be agreeing in tense with an abstract or deleted verb of the type 'he said' or with the ontological pastness of the reported event. A speaker can express mockery or disbelief of a statement made by his or her interlocutor by repeating the statement but shifting the tense to the past indefinite:

- (4) --Toj poveke od tebe znae za boksiranje.  
--Toj poveke znael!  
--He knows more about boxing than you do.  
--He knows more, indeed!

This usage, which is called dubitative, can be explained as a kind of emotive reported, i.e. the past indefinite is agreeing with an abstract or deleted clause of the type 'that fool just said'. The admirative is then explained as an emotive or metaphoric use of the dubitative to express surprise similar to English usage of the type I can't believe it's really you!. Since the usage is emotive, metaphorical, nonliteral, etc., it does not contradict the notion of invariance.

The following facts, which have not been previously noted in

the literature, are not accounted for by this argument. First of all, with less than half a dozen exceptions, virtually all attested admiratives with unambiguously present meanings are some form of bil 'be' or the semantically closely related imal 'have' (cf. Benveniste 1966). Secondly, the admirative use of the past indefinite does not appear to be acceptable for describing single actions which do not carry an implication of state (as in example [1]), general truth (example [2]), or regular occurrence (example [3]):

- (5) \*Gledaj, begal!  
[as a thief flees the scene of a crime] Look, he's running!
- (6) \*A be toj bil!  
[suddenly spotting the villain on the street] Hey, that's him!

These facts suggest that the Macedonian admirative may be a kind of stative or permansive perfect usage in which the action or state described extends into or is relevant for the past as well as the present. (The past indefinite is descended from an old periphrastic perfect.) In this manner, it can be argued that the admirative usage of the past indefinite is not inconsistent with its marking for pastness, i.e. there is no conflict with the invariant meaning. From a generative viewpoint, the few admiratives involving verbs other than bil or imal could be said to be derived from underlying structures with bil, e.g. for example [2]: Što momičeto mi bilo ubava jadačka! 'What a fine eater my girl is!' or something similar. Nevertheless, the emotive/pseudodubitative character of these utterances must also be acknowledged, and strikingly similar phenomena in Albanian and Turkish need to be carefully compared to the Macedonian and Bulgarian.

#### References

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