ЛИНГВИСТИКА / LINGUISTICS

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REPLACEMENT OF INFINITIVES BY *DA*-CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE HISTORY OF BULGARIAN: DIACHRONIC AND FORMAL ANALYSIS

Abstract. *The paper studies the diachronic patterns of competition between infinitives and da-constructions (also known as 'Balkan subjunctives') in Bulgarian. The use of these grammatical categories is studied across different historical periods (from Old Bulgarian to Modern Bulgarian) and in different syntactic contexts. It is argued that certain aspects of infinitive loss and its replacement by da-constructions were due to a broader typological drift from non-finite to finite structures, while others were a result of local language-contact pressures within the Balkan-sprachbund area. The paper also provides a formal analysis of the diachronic syntax of the mood marker da, which accounts for its spread to control contexts typical of infinitive use and the eventual complete replacement of infinitives by da-complements in Bulgarian.*

Keywords: *infinitive, da-construction, subjunctive mood, control, Balkan sprachbund*

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ЗАМЯНА НА ИНФИНИТИВИТЕ С ДА-КОНСТРУКЦИИ В ИСТОРИЯТА НА БЪЛГАРСКИЯ ЕЗИК: ДИАХРОНЕН И ФОРМАЛЕН АНАЛИЗ

Резюме. *Статията изследва диахронните модели на конкуренция между инфинитивите и да-конструкциите (известни още като „балкански конюнктиви") в българския език. Употребата на тези граматични категории*

се изследва през различни исторически периоди (от старобългарски до съвременен български) и в различни синтактични контексти. Твърди се, че някои аспекти на загубата на инфинитива и замяната му с да-конструкцията се дължат на по-широк типологичен преход от нефинитни към финитни структури, докато други са резултат от влияния на локални езикови контакти в рамките на Балканския езиков съюз. Статията представя и формален диахронен синтактичен анализ на маркера за наклонение да, който обяснява разпространие на да в контрол-контексти, типични за употребата на инфинитив, и окончателната пълна замяна на инфинитива с да-конструкции в българския език.

Ключови думи: *инфинитив, да-конструкция, конюнктив, контрол, Балкански езиков съюз*

1. Introduction

The paper deals with the diachronic patterns pertaining to the use of infinitives and *da*-constructions across the history of Bulgarian (Bg). Present-day Bg has almost completely lost its infinitive, having replaced it in most contexts with finite complements headed by the mood item *da* (Мирчев / Mirchev 1978, Macrobert 1980, Joseph 1983, Terzi 1992).[1] Such complements are often referred to as 'Balkan subjunctives' in the literature, while the item *da* is typically analyzed as a subjunctive marker (Krapova 1997, 2001; Sočanac 2017 etc.).[2] The replacement of infinitives by *da*-subjunctives in Bg is illustrated below. Examples from (1) to (4) feature control complements where most languages tend to use infinitives (or other types of non-finite complements).[3] Bg, on the other hand, employs finite *da*-

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[1] There is some dialectal variation when it comes to infinitive use in present-day Bulgarian. Infinitives can still be used in some of the complements exemplified in (1-4) in the eastern dialects of the language (e.g. with control verbs such as *мога* 'can'). In standard Bulgarian, on the other hand, the infinitive has been reduced to a few fixed expressions, where it appears in a shortened form (without the suffix -ti), such as: *може би* ('may be'); *стига чете* ('enough reading', 'don't read anymore'); or *недей ходи* ('don't go') (Joseph 1983). These will not be discussed in the present paper.

[2] The item *da* will thus be glossed as SUBJ (abbreviation for the subjunctive marker) throughout the paper. The terms '*da*-constructions' and 'subjunctives' will be used interchangeably.

[3] The paper is not concerned with the distinction between control and raising predicates, as there does not seem to be a meaningful difference between the two in relation to infinitive vs subjunctive complementation patterns discussed here. For the sake of simplicity, all predicates that force obligatory co-reference between the embedded subject and the matrix subject (or object) will be referred to here as control predicates, but the paper takes no position as to the exact syntactic mechanisms involved in the syntactic derivations of these types of clauses.

complements (sometimes called 'control subjunctives', as in Landau [2004]) in this context.

(1) a.	*Иван*	*иска*	*да*	*дойде.*	(Bg)
	I.	want.3SG	SUBJ	come.3SG	
b.	*Иван*	*хочет*	*прийти.*		(Ru)
	I.	want.3SG	come.INF		

'Ivan wants to come.'

(2) a.	*Мария*	*може*	*да*	*плува.*	(Bg)
	M.	can.3SG	SUBJ	swim.3SG	
b.	*Marie*	*peut*	*nager.*		(Fr)
	M.	can.3SG	swim.INF		

'Mary can swim.'

(3) a.	*Тя*	*започва*	*да*	*учи.*	(Bg)
	she	begin.3SG	SUBJ	study.3SG	
b.	*Sie*	*beginnt*	*zu*	*studieren.*	(Ger)
	she	begin.3SG	to	study.INF	

'She is beginning to study.'

(4) a.	*Той*	*се*	*опитва*	*да*	*разбере.* (Bg)
	he	REFL	try.3SG	SUBJ	understand.3SG
b.	*On*	*nastoji*	*shvatiti.*		(Cr)
	he	try.3SG	understand.INF		

'He is trying to understand.'

In examples (1a-4a), we can see Bg using finite *da*-subjunctives under control predicates, where other languages, such as Russian (1b), French (2b), German (3b) or Croatian (4b) use infinitives.

Nevertheless, the present-day patterns in (1-4) were not always observed during the history of Bg. In Old Bg and Middle Bg (roughly spanning from 9th to 16th century), the infinitive used to be a significantly more productive category. In the examples below, we can see some typical patterns of infinitive use in Old Bg:

(5) a.	нача	ємоу	даръі	многъі	даіати
	began.AOR.3SG	him.DAT	gifts	many	give.INF

'he began giving him many gifts'
(*Vita Constantini*, 11.45)

b. нє можааше никътожє **минѫти** пѫтємь тѣмь
NEG can.IMPF.3SG nobody go.INF path that
'nobody could go through that path'
(*Codex Marianus,* Matthew 8.28)

c. нє трѣбоуѭтъ **отити**
NEG must.3PL go.INF
'they should not go'
(*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 14.16)

(6) a. повєли ми прити къ тєбѣ по водамъ
tell.IMP.2SG me.DAT come.INF to you on waters
'tell me to come to you on the waters'
(*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 14.28)

b. исплъниша оба корабла. ѣко **погрѫжати** сѧ има
filled.AOR.3PL both boats so-that sink.INF REFL them.DAT
'they filled both boats so that they sank'
(*Codex Marianus*, Luke 5.7)

c. подобаатъ **прити** прѣжде
is-necessary come.INF before
'it is necessary to come before'
(*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 17.10)

In the examples in (5), we can observe infinitives being used in Old Bg in some of the typical subject-control contexts also featured in (1-4) above. In (6), we can see some other types of clauses where the infinitive occurs in Old Bg: object-control complements (6a), clause-final adjuncts (6b) and impersonal constructions (6c). These will all be studied in the present paper.

In Section 2, each of the syntactic contexts presented above will be analyzed in more detail, which will allow us to observe that infinitive loss and its replacement with *da*-subjunctives did not proceed in a uniform manner across different types of clauses during the history of Bg. I will therefore argue, in Section 3, that infinitive loss in Bg was caused by different diachronic linguistic factors: in non-control environments (i.e. clauses with a separate subject), the infinitive was lost due to a broader typological drift from non-finite to finite structures, which was widely observed on a cross-linguistic level (across Indo-European as well as Uralic languages, among others); in control contexts (i.e. clauses with the same subject), the infinitive was replaced by control subjunctives due to local language-contact pressures specific to the Balkan region and the Balkan sprachbund contact area. In §4, I will carry out a formal analysis of the diachronic syntax of the item *da*, based on the notion of *Implicational*

Complementation Hierarchy proposed by authors such as Ramchand and Svenonius (2014) and Wurmbrand and Lohninger (2023). This will allow me to explain how the finite *da*-constructions were able to spread to obligatory-control environments where we typically observe infinitives (or other non-finite constructions) across languages. §5 advances some speculative conclusions on the nature of language-contact pressures that resulted in specific complementation patterns observed in Bg (and other Balkan languages). §6 summarizes and concludes the paper.

2. Diachronic patterns of infinitive vs *da*-subjunctive use across different syntactic contexts

The extant descriptive literature on Bg provides us with a broad overview of infinitive-loss patterns during the diachronic evolution of the language. While the infinitive was a productive grammatical category in Old Bg (as we already saw in [5-6]), its use steadily declined across the Middle Bg period, and by early modern and modern periods (from 17th century onwards), it was reduced to isolated and unproductive remnants (see fn.1) (Мирчев / Mirchev 1937, 1978, Joseph 1983, Joseph and Friedman 2025 etc.). As a preliminary remark, one should note that the primary textual sources used to study the diachronic competition between infinitives and *da*-subjunctives in Bg do not faithfully reflect the evolution of these categories in everyday speech. The historical sources mainly involve religious and legal documents written in formal and conservative register, where the infinitive (as a more conservative historical variant as compared to *da*-subjunctive) is overrepresented in relation to the spoken language at the time.[4] Nevertheless, a close study of the patterns of infinitive-subjunctive competition across different syntactic contexts can provide good (albeit indirect) evidence of the diachronic evolution of the use of these categories in spoken language as well.

In this section, we will look at the main syntactic contexts of infinitive vs subjunctive use in Old Bg: matrix clauses (sometimes also referred to as

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[4] The overrepresentation of the infinitive in these sources is further compounded by translation effects. Most of the historical documents from Old and Middle Bg involve translations of classical sources, usually written in Greek (either Ancient Greek or Biblical/Koinè Greek). Given that the infinitive was a very widespread category in both Ancient and Koinè Greek (unlike in Modern Greek, where it was mostly lost as well – see §3), the translation effects certainly contributed to the overrepresentation of this category in Bg historical sources as well. I was careful to exclude from my analysis the examples involving direct calques from Greek which did not correspond to native Bg and Slavic grammar (e.g. the use of infinitives in ECM-type constructions with accusative arguments). All the examples featured in the paper involve grammatical constructions that were independently attested as parts of native (Old or Middle) Bg grammar.

'root subjunctives') (2.1); clause-final adjuncts (2.2); impersonal constructions (2.3); and complements to finite verbs (2.4). Then we will briefly look at the evolution of the competition between these two grammatical categories in Middle Bg (2.5). After that, we will move on to a deeper analysis of the observed diachronic patterns (§3 and 4).

2.1. Root subjunctives

Main-clause constructions that I will (briefly) discuss here typically denote optative (7a) or imperative-type meanings (7b), as in the Modern Bg examples below:

(7) a. *Да   си   жив   и   здрав!*
     SUBJ   be.2SG   alive   and   healthy
     'May you be alive and healthy.'

  b. *Да   не   казва   нищо!*
     SUBJ   NEG   say.3SG   nothing
     'He should not say anything.'

These types of constructions have undergone the least amount of diachronic change during the history of Bg.[5] *Da*-constructions were used in this context already in Old Bg, as we can see in (8) below, whereas the infinitive was very rarely found there.

(8) a. да   придетъ   цсрествие   твое
     SUBJ   come.3SG   kingdom   your.
     'may your kingdom come'
     (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 6.10)

  b. да   оучит   са   и   разѹмѣет
     SUBJ   learn.3SG   REFL   and   understand.3SG
     'he should learn and understand'
     (*Vita Constantini*, 16.55)

  c. да   идѣте   копайте
     SUBJ   go.IMP.2SG   dig.IMP.2SG
     'go and dig'
     (*Codex Suprasliensis*, 3)

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[5] The only change with respect to Old Bg is that, in the present-day language, the function and distribution of these root subjunctives has expanded, so they are no longer used only in the irrealis-type contexts given in (8) above (Деянова / Deyanova 1986, Асенова / Asenova 2002, Иванова / Ivanova 2018 etc.). This issue will not be dealt with in the present paper.

Given that no competing patterns between infinitives and *da*-constructions were observed in these clauses at any point in the history of Bg (at least as far as we can gather from the available sources), they will be of less interest for the present paper.

2.2. Clause-final adjuncts

When it comes to clause-final adjuncts, the paper will mainly deal with those that involve purposive or resultative clauses, since these are the types of contexts where we most typically observe the grammatical constructions under study. The infinitive was also not a very productive category in clause-final adjuncts, since Old Bg sources already predominantly feature *da*-constructions in this context as well. Nevertheless, the infinitive was more productive in these types of clauses than in root subjunctives in 2.1. The examples in (9) feature some instances of infinitive use in clause-final adjuncts in Old Bg, while those in (10) feature subjunctives[6].

(9) a. не отъвѣшта   ємоу   ни   къ єдиномоу глоу ѣко   **дивити** са илємоноу ѕѣло
    NEG answer.AOR.3SG him.DAT not by one   word so-that marvel.INF governor a-lot
    'he did not answer him with even one word so that the governor greatly marveled'
    (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 27.14)

 b. исплънишѫ   оба   кораблѣ ѣко   **погрѫжати** са   има
    filled.AOR.3PL both boats   so-that sink.INF   REFL them.DAT
    'they filled both boats so that they sank'
    (*Codex Marianus*, Luke 5.7)

(10) a. дръжаахѫ   и   да   не   би   отъшелъ   отъ нихъ
    held.IMPF.3PL him.ACC SUBJ NEG be. SUBJ.3SG depart   from them.GEN
    'they held him so that he would not leave them'
    (*Codex Marianus*, Luke 4.42)

 b. исплънишѫ   са   дьнье   да   родитъ
    fulfilled.AOR.3PL REFL days   SUBJ give-birth.3SG
    'days arrived for her to give birth'
    (*Codex Assemanius*, Luke 2.6, cit. in Мирчев / Mirchev 1978: 233)

The subjunctive example in (10b) from *Codex Assemanius* is particularly interesting because in another source, *Codex Zographensis*, we can observe the use of an infinitive in the very same clause:

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[6] 9a, 9b and 11 below are typical Dativus cum infinitivo constructions which translate the Greek Accusativus cum infinitivo.

(11) испльниша   сѧ   дьнье   родити   еи
fulfilled.AOR.3PL   REFL   days   give-birth.INF   she.DAT
(*Codex Zographensis*, cit. in Мирчев / Mirchev 1978: 233)

The example in (11) involves an infinitive with a separate subject in dative case, while the one in (10b) features the finite subjunctive complement headed by *da* and an empty *pro* subject. The variation in (10b-11) shows us that infinitive-subjunctive competition was occurring in these types of syntactic environments already in Old Bg. In the following sections, we will observe similar competition patterns in other syntactic contexts as well.

2.3. Impersonal constructions

The next type of syntactic context that we will look at are impersonal constructions selecting infinitive or subjunctive embedded complements. There were a number of such constructions in Old Bg sources, involving impersonal predicates such as подобаатъ 'it is necessary'; довьлетъ 'it is enough'; достоино естъ 'it is worthy'; оунѣе естъ 'it is better' etc. These constructions will allow us to observe the main syntactic patterns pertaining to the competing use of infinitives and *da*-constructions in Old Bg.[7]

The use of infinitive was greatly favored with impersonal constructions involving generic readings, where both the matrix and the embedded clauses feature impersonal subjects, as in (12):

(12) a. нѣстъ   добро   отѧти   хлѣба   чадомъ
NEG-is   good   take-away.INF   bread   children.DAT
'it is not good to take away bread from children'
(*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 15.26)

   b. подобаатъ   въсегда   молити   сѧ
is-necessary.3SG   always   pray.INF   REFL
'it is necessary to always pray'
(*Ibid.* Luke 18.1)

   c. оунѣе   естъ   не   женити сѧ
better   is   NEG   marry.INF REFL
'it is better not to marry' (*Ibid.* Matthew 19.10)

Given that both matrix and embedded clauses in (12) feature the same type of impersonal subject, they are comparable to control complements involving subject identity that we previously observed in (1-5). These are the types of contexts where the use of infinitive remained the most stable, as we will see in more detail later.

The next type of impersonal construction that we will look at here involves object control, i.e. the matrix impersonal construction features an indirect object in dative case, and the subject of the embedded clause co-refers to the matrix object. In this type of syntactic context, we observe infinitive-subjunctive competition already in Old Bg, as shown in the examples below:

(13) a. нє   достоино   ємоу   бѣ   ѣсти
NEG   worthy   him.DAT   was.IMPF.3SG   eat.INF
'it was unworthy for him to eat'
(*Ibid*. Matthew 12.4)

  b. подобааше   ти   оубо въдати сърєбро мoє тръжъникомъ
is-necessary.IMPF you.DAT thus give.INF silver   my   money-merchants.DAT
'it was necessary for you to give my silver to money merchants.'

(14) a. довьлетъ оучєникоу   да   бждетъ ѣкожє   оучитєль   єго
is-enough disciple.DAT SUBJ be.3SG like   teacher   his
'it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher'
(*Ibid.* Matthew 10.25)

  b. оунѣє ємоу   єстъ да   обѣсатъ жръновъ на въи   єго
better him.DAT is   SUBJ hang.3SG millstone on neck   his
'it is better for him to hang a millstone around his neck (than to harm any of these little ones)'
(*Ibid.* Matthew 18.16)

We can observe the infinitives being used under object control in (13) and subjunctives in (14).

The final type of impersonal constructions that we will look at here are those that feature an independent embedded subject, which does not co-refer to any matrix argument. In this type of context, the use of *da*-constructions is favored over infinitives already in Old Bg.

(15) a. оунѣє бо   ти   єстъ да   погъиблєтъ єдинъ оудъ твоихъ
better part. you.DAT is   SUBJ perish.3SG one   limb your
'it is better for you that one of your limbs perishes (than your entire body going to hell)'
(*Ibid.* Matthew 5.29)

b. оунѣе естъ вамъ   да   азъ   идѫ.
   better is   you.DAT SUBJ I.NOM go.1SG
   'it is better for you that I go'
   (*Ibid.* John 16.7)

The preliminary generalizations that we can advance based on Old Bg data featuring impersonal constructions are the following: (i) the infinitive is predominantly used under subject identity; (ii) there is competing use between infinitives and *da*-constructions under object control; (iii) *da*-subjunctives are favored in clauses with an independent subject. These generalizations will be further confirmed by data pertaining to complements embedded under different types of control predicates, featured in the following section.

2.4. Clausal complements to verbal predicates

The first type of predicates that we will look at here are those involving subject control, i.e. verbs selecting complements in which the embedded subject co-refers with the matrix subject. These types of complements predominantly feature infinitive constructions in Old Bg sources (the examples previously featured in [5] are reintroduced in [16] below).

(16) a. нача   емоу   даръі   многъі даꙗти
        began.AOR.3SG him.DAT gifts   many   give.INF
        '(he) began giving him many gifts'
        (*Vita Constantini*, 11.45)

   b. не   можааше   никтоже минѫти пѫтемь тѣмь
      NEG   can.IMPF.3SG   nobody   go.INF path   that
      'nobody could go through that path'
      (*Codex Marianus,* Matthew 8.28)

   c. не   трѣбоуѭтъ   отити
      NEG   must.3PL   go.INF
      'they should not go'
      (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 14.16)

Old Bg thus exhibits the opposite pattern as compared to Modern Bg in relation to complements such as those in (16): while Modern Bg employs *da*-subjunctives to the exclusion of infinitives in these types of clauses, Old Bg used infinitives to the exclusion of subjunctives in this context.

Complements embedded under object-control predicates (typically directive verbs such as велѣти 'tell, order', молити 'plead, beg' etc.) pattern

with object-control impersonal constructions we observed in 2.3 in that they exhibit infinitive-subjunctive competition in Old Bg.

(17) a. повели   намъ   **ити**   въ   стадо   свиное.
      tell.IMP.2SG   us.DAT   go.INF   in   herd   pig
      'tell us to go to the pig herd'
      (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 8.31)

   b. богъ же   велитъ   въсакомоу   **да**   бъı   въ   разоумь истин'нъıи пришьлъ
      God   part. tells.3SG everyone.DAT   SUBJ be.3SG in   reason true   come.PST.PRT.
      'God tells everyone to truly come to reason'
      (*Vita Constantini*, 14.16)

   c. молѣахѫ   и   **да**   не   повелитъ имъ   въ бездънѫ **ити**.
      beg.IMPF.3PL him.ACC   SUBJ NEG   tell.3SG them.DAT in abyss   go.INF
      'they begged him not to tell them to go into the abyss.'
      (*Codex Marianus*, Luke 8.31)

The example in (17a) features the infinitive in the embedded clause, (17b) features a *da*-subjunctive, while (17c) involves a complex clause where both the *da*-construction and the infinitive are embedded under two separate directive predicates (молити 'plead, beg' and повелѣти 'tell', respectively). This illustrates the infinitive-subjunctive competition patterns that we observe in this type of syntactic environment throughout the Old Bg period.

       The last type of syntactic context that we will look at here involves optional control verbs like хотѣти 'want, will', i.e. verbs which can introduce both complements with the same subject and complements with an independent subject. As we can see in (18), these types of predicates can also select both infinitive (18a) and *da*-subjunctive complements (18b).

(18) a. аще   хоцете   приѩти
      if   want.2PL   receive.INF
      'if you want to/will receive (God's law)[8]' (…)
      (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 11.14)

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[8] Complements embedded under хотѣти can receive either a volitional or a futurate reading (and sometimes the distinction between the two is not clear), since this verb was eventually grammaticalized into a future-tense marker in Bg (Friedman and Joseph 2025). This issue will not be addressed here in further detail since the finer semantic distinctions observed in relation to the verb хотѣти are not relevant for the present paper – what counts are the complementation patterns associated with this predicate.

b. хоштеть   да   бы   вьсакъ чловѣкъ спасенъ былъ
   want.3SG SUBJ be.3SG every   man   saved   be.PST.PRT
   'he wants every man to be saved'
   (*Vita Methodii*, 104b)

Note, however, that optional-control predicates such as хотѣти do not exhibit the same type of infinitive-subjunctive competition patterns in Old Bg as the ones observed with object-control predicates in 2.3, because they restrict the use of the infinitive to subject-control contexts, as in (18a), while the subjunctive tends to be used when the embedded subject is different (18b). This further confirms the generalization put forward at the end of 2.3, i.e. the fact that the infinitive is predominantly used under subject identity whereas the subjunctive is favored when the embedded clause has a different subject. These distribution patterns will not significantly change until the Middle Bg period.

2.5. Infinitive-subjunctive competition in Middle Bulgarian: Brief overview

We do not observe a radical departure in infinitive vs subjunctive competition patterns in Middle Bg as compared to Old Bg (partly due to the formal, conservative language featured in the Middle Bg textual sources as well). Nevertheless, there is a steady drift away from infinitives towards *da*-constructions across all syntactic contexts under discussion. For instance, *da*-subjunctives begin to increasingly predominate in clause-final adjuncts, such as those in (19):

(19) a. приди   къ мнѣ, да   ти   повѣмъ вьса таины троискыж
        come.IMP.2SG to me SUBJ you   tell.1SG all secrets Trojan
        'come to me, so that I tell you all Trojan secrets'
        (*Tale of Troy*, 46b)

   b. ... понеже да   го   имат [...] помощника въ всакоих напастех и ратехь
        so-that SUBJ him   have.3SG helper   in every   scourges and wars
        '…so that he will have him as a helper in all scourges and wars.'
        (*Bulgarian charters*, cit. in MacRobert 1980: 198)

There are barely any infinitive examples in this type of syntactic environment in Middle Bg sources.

The most noticeable shift, however, involves subject-control complements. While these types of clauses only featured infinitives in Old Bg

sources, Middle Bg begins to exhibit a degree of infinitive-subjunctive competition in this context.

(20) a. хотѣше   погоубити   менелаоуша
       wanted.IMPF.3PL   execute-INF   Menelaus
       'they wanted to execute Menelaus'
       (*Tale of Troy*, 51b-52a)

    b. хотѣхѫ   да   погоубѫть   асилеєша
       wanted.AOR.3PL SUBJ execute.3PL   Achilles
       'they wanted to execute Achilles'
       (*Tale of Troy*, 54a, cit. in MacRobert 1980: 162)

(21) a. не   придохъ   слоужити
       NEG   come.AOR.1SG   serve-INF
       нѣсмь   пришелъ   да   слоужѫ
       NEG-be.1SG   come.PST.PRT   SUBJ serve.1SG
       'I did not come to serve'
       (Joseph 1983: 119)

Even though the instances of subjunctive use in this context are still relatively rare in Middle Bg sources (once again, due to the conservative nature of the language contained in them), the infinitive-subjunctive variation patterns of the type exemplified in (20-21) allow us to surmise that the competition between these two categories was already well underway during the Middle Bg period.

Based on the observations made thus far, we can clearly note that the replacement of infinitives by subjunctives was not a uniform process but it affected different types of clauses across different diachronic stages. Infinitives were first replaced in embedded clauses (complements or adjuncts) containing an independent subject, while clauses involving different types of control readings maintained a more stable use of the infinitive. When it comes to control complements, infinitives first began to be replaced in clauses involving object control, while subject-control complements maintained the infinitive for the longest time. In the following section, I will argue that the infinitive loss in these different types of syntactic environments was not caused by a single factor but by (at least) two separate factors: infinitive-subjunctive replacement in non-control contexts was due to a broader typological drift from non-finite to finite structures, while the infinitive loss in control contexts (in particular subject control) was a contact-induced sprachbund innovation.

3. Infinitive loss: Typological drift vs local contact-induced change

Partial retreat of infinitives in favor of finite clauses (including subjunctives) was observed on a cross-linguistic level, often (but not always) as part of a broader drift from head-final (SOV) to head-initial (SVO) structures (Herman 1963, Karlsson 2009, Kiss 2013, Madariaga 2015 etc.). This drift was observed in languages as typologically diverse as Romance, Greek, Slavic or Hungarian (and Uralic languages more generally), among others. In (22), we can observe an instance of infinitive-subjunctive replacement that took place during the diachronic evolution of modern Romance languages from Latin.

(22) a. *Volo   eum   venire*.   (Lat)
      want.1SG   he.ACC   come.INF
    b. *Je veux qu' il vienne.*   (Fr)
      I   want that he   come.SUBJ.3SG
      Quiero   que   venga.   (Sp)
      want.1SG that   come.SUBJ.3SG
      'I want him to come.'

The Classical-Latin example in (22a) features the so-called *accusativus-cum-infinitivo* construction, i.e. an infinitive complement where the subject of the embedded clause is assigned accusative case (which is the exact syntactic equivalent of the ECM construction used in English in this context). However, the use of this type of construction in modern Romance languages such as French (22b) or Spanish (23c) would be ungrammatical, since the infinitive was lost in this context during their diachronic evolution. Only the subjunctive can be used in such complements in these languages.

A similar diachronic development affected Hungarian as well, given that the distribution of the infinitive was much more widespread in Old Hungarian than it is in the present-day variant of the language. One instance of infinitive loss during the history of Hungarian is exemplified below:

(23) a. haggatoc   monnot   **nǫni**
      let.IMP.2PL   both.ACC   grow-INF
      (*Müncheni kódex*, early 15th c.)
    b. *engedgyétec   hogy mind az kettő̋   **neuekedgyéc***
      allow.IMP.2PL   that   both the two.NOM   grow.SUBJ.3PL
      (*Szent Biblia*, late 16th c.)
      'let them both grow'

The examples in (23) feature an identical Biblical passage that was rendered with an infinitive complement in an earlier translation and a subjunctive

complement in a later one. Similar patterns of infinitive replacement were consistently observed in Hungarian historical sources, indicating a broader drift away from the use of the infinitive in this language as well (Károly 1956, Bacskai-Atkari and Dékány 2014).

A similar drift was observed in Slavic languages as well, including those that were not affected by the Bg-type generalized infinitive loss, such as Russian. Old Russian also exhibited wider distribution of infinitives as compared to Modern Russian, particularly in those clauses that featured a different subject.

(24) a. Ѵвидѣ князь […] яко ѹже взятѹ быти градѹ (Old Ru)
         saw prince   that already taken be.INF town.DAT
         (*1st Novgorod Chronicle*, 123, cit. in Madariaga 2015: 15)
     b. *Князь увидел, что город был уже взят* (Modern Ru)
         prince saw that town was already taken
         'The prince saw that the town had already been taken.'

The Old-Russian example in (24a) features an infinitive clause with a separate dative subject, embedded under the perception verb ѹвидѣти 'see'. This type of construction would be ungrammatical in Modern Russian, which uses a finite clause with a nominative subject in this context. This shift is reminiscent of infinitive replacement in clauses with a separate subject observed in the diachronic evolution of Bg as well (the relevant Old Bg example is reintroduced below).

(25) a. испльниша сѧ дьнье родити еи
         fulfilled.AOR.3PL REFL days give-birth.INF she.DAT
         (*Codex Zographensis*, cit. in Мирчев / Mirchev 1978: 233)
     b. испльниша сѧ дьнье да родитъ
         fulfilled.AOR.3PL REFL days SUBJ give-birth.3SG
         (*Codex Assemanius,* Ibid.)
         'days arrived for her to give birth'

In fact, all of the instances of infinitive replacement featured here in §3 involve clauses with an independent embedded subject. This is the primary type of syntactic environment that was affected by the typological drift from non-finite to finite structures. Therefore, the Bg loss of infinitive in this context should be seen as part of this broader drift as well.

The infinitive loss in subject-control complements, on the other hand, is a more exceptional development. As we can see in (26) below, all the

languages featured here in §3 still use infinitives in complements selected by subject-control complements (e.g. *can*, *must*, *begin* etc.).

(26) a. *Il commence à écrire.*   (Fr)
       he begins   to write.INF
   b. *Debe   estudiar.*   (Sp)
       must.3SG   study.INF
   c. *Kell   jönni.*   (Hun)
       must.3SG   come.INF
   d. *Иван умеет   плавать.*   (Ru)
       I.   can.3SG swim.INF

Moreover, if we compare Bg to other Slavic languages in this context (in particular those that are not part of the Balkan-sprachbund area), we observe clear contrasts in relation to infinitive vs subjunctive complementation.

(27) a. *Иван иска   да   дойде.*   (Bg)
       I.   wants SUBJ come.3SG
   b. *Иван хочет прийти.*   (Ru)
       I.   wants come.INF
       'Ivan wants to come.'

(28) a. *Мария може   да   плува.*   (Bg)
       M.   can   SUBJ swim.3SG
   b. *Maryja potrafi pływać.*   (Po)
       M.   can   swim.INF
       'Mary can to swim.'

(29) a. *Тя   започва да   учи.*   (Bg)
       she   begins SUBJ study.3SG
   b. *Ona se   začne učiti.*   (Slo)
       she REFL begins   study.ING
       'She is beginning to study.'

(30) a. *Той се   опитва да   разбере.*   (Bg)
       he   REFL tries   SUBJ understand.3SG
   b. *On nastoji shvatiti.*   (Cr)
       he tries   understand.INF
       'He is trying to understand.'

In (27a-30a), we can observe that Bg uses finite *da*-constructions in control complements where Russian (27b), Polish (28b), Slovenian (29b) and Croatian (30b) use infinitives. Therefore, the infinitive loss observed in Bg can neither be seen as a result of broader typological processes, nor as a Slavic genealogical development.

However, if we look at languages that are neighboring to Bg in this context, we will observe that they all feature a similar type of finite complementation in control complements such as those in (27-30).

(31) a. *O Kostas bori na odhiji.* (Gr)
     the K. can.3SG SUBJ drive.3SG
     'Kostas can drive.'

  b. *Maria perpiqet të shkruaje.* (Alb)
     M. try.3SG SUBJ write.3SG
     'Maria is trying to write.'

  c. *Ion a reuşit să termine cartea.* (Rom)
     I. has managed SUBJ finish.3SG book
     'Ion managed to finish the book.'

Balkan languages such as Greek (31a), Albanian (31b) and Romanian (31c) pattern with Bg in this context in that they introduce finite complements (usually also referred to as subjunctives) in control environments, embedded under specialized mood markers (Greek *na*, Albanian *të*, and Romanian *să*), which are functional equivalents of the Bg *da* (Terzi 1992, Varlokosta 1993, Rivero 1994, Turano, 1994, Krapova 2001, Roussou 2009). Therefore, the replacement of infinitives by subjunctives in this context is clearly a contact-induced development specific to the Balkan-sprachbund area.[9]

The last syntactic context that we will look at here are object-control complements, embedded under directive predicates such as *tell*, *order*, *plead* etc. Obviously, Bg phased out its infinitives in these clauses as well and can only use finite *da*-subjunctives in this context:

(32) a. *Той ми каза да дойда.*
     he me.DAT tell.AOR.3SG SUBJ come.1SG
     'He told me to come.'

  b. *Тя те моли да дойдеш.*
     she you.ACC plead.3SG SUBJ come.1SG
     'She is asking you to come.'

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[9] For a detailed discussion of Balkan sprachbund and the various linguistic (and extra-linguistic) features that characterize it (in addition to infinitive loss), see Friedman and Joseph (2025) and the references therein.

Nevertheless, it is not as clear whether the infinitive loss and its replacement with *da*-constructions in these types of clauses was also a Balkan-sprachbund effect (as was clearly the case with subject-control complements), because non-Balkan languages exhibit some mixed complementation patterns in this context as well.

The typical cross-linguistic pattern in object-control complements of this type is to use the infinitive in the presence of an overt matrix-object controller (33) and the subjunctive in the absence of a matrix controller (34), as illustrated in the Italian and French examples below.

(33) a. *Ti   ha   detto   di venire.*   (It)
    you.DAT has   told   to come.INF
   b. *Il   t'   a   ordonné de   venir.*   (Fr)
    he you.DAT has ordered to   come.INF
    'He told/ordered you to come.'

(34) a. *Ordina che   parti.*   (It)
    order.3SG   that   leave.SUBJ.2SG
   b. *Il ordonne que tu   parte.*   (Fr)
    he orders   that you   leave.SUBJ.2SG
    'He orders that you leave.'

Nevertheless, certain languages exhibit mixed infinitive vs subjunctive complementation patterns even in the presence of the matrix controller – see the Spanish (35) and Russian (36) examples below.

(35) a. *Te   pide   de venir   con   ella.*   (Sp)
    you.DAT ask.3SG to come.INF with her
   b. *Te   pide   que vengas   con   ella.*
    you.DAT ask.3SG that come.2SG   with   her
    'She is asking you to come with her.'

(36) a. *Он велел тебе   прийти.*   (Ru)
    he told   you.DAT   come.INF
   b. *Он велел тебе,   чтобы ты   пришел*
    he told   you.DAT   SUBJ you.NOM   come
    'He told you to come.'

Moreover, a language like Croatian, which has not been affected by the Balkan infinitive loss in subject-control contexts (see example [30b], for instance),

can nonetheless only use finite *da*-complements in object-control clauses (even in the presence of the matrix controller), while the use of infinitive produces ungrammaticality.[10]

(37)   Rekao mi   je   {da   dođem / * doći}.
          told   me.DAT PST.AUX SUBJ come.1SG come.INF
          'He told me to come.'

Croatian thus patterns with Bg in this context, unlike in subject-control complements.

A more detailed study of object-control clauses is required before we can draw any definitive conclusions as to the types of diachronic processes that were responsible for the Inf loss observed in these types of complements in Bg. Nevertheless, the data advanced here so far lend themselves to some preliminary hypotheses in this context. The replacement of Bg infinitives by subjunctives in object-control complements was likely a result of a confluence of broader typological forces and local Balkan-sprachbund effects. The competition between infinitives and *da*-constructions that we observed in this type of syntactic environment in Old Bg (see §2.4 and example [17], for instance) was a broader cross-linguistic pattern, which we still observe in many languages today. Nevertheless, the complete infinitive>subjunctive replacement in this context, which took place more recently from a diachronic perspective, was a likely Balkan-sprachbund innovation. The Croatian pattern in (37) could then be seen as a result of Balkan contact effects as well, given the geographical position of this language at the periphery of the Balkan-sprachbund area.
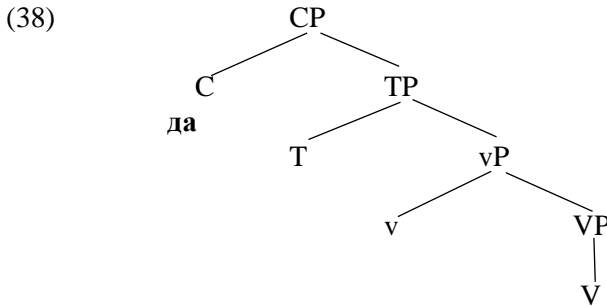
4. Formal analysis

Here I will develop a formal analysis of the diachronic syntax of the mood item *da*, which will allow me to account for the spread of *da*-constructions to obligatory control environments (i.e. the syntactic development that was identified as a contact-induced Balkan-sprachbund innovation in §3).

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[10] The item *da* in Croatian (and BCMS in general) shares some of the properties of its Bg counterpart, but its functions and distribution are not identical to Bg *da* (see Sočanac [2017] or Ivanova [2018], among others). The syntactic properties of the BCMS *da* will be addressed in more detail in §4.2 when discussing Serbian data.

4.1. Diachronic syntax of the item *da*

In Old Bg, *da* was a high C-head subcategorizing for *irrealis* clauses (i.e. clauses with no actual-world realization), as illustrated below.

(38)

```
                    CP
                  /    \
                C        TP
               да       /  \
                       T     vP
                            /  \
                           v    VP
                                |
                                V
```

The evidence for the high C-position of *da* is provided by Old Bg examples such as those in (39), where left-fronted topicalized constituents intervene between the item *da* and the embedded verb.

(39) a. да   своиѫ доушѫ положитъ за дрѹгъı
      SUBJ his soul   lay-down for others
      'that he lays down his soul for others'
      (*Vita Constantini*, 6.38)

  b. нѣсмъ   достоинъ   да   въ   домъ   мои   вънидеши
      NEG-be.1SG worthy   SUBJ in   home   my   enter.2SG
      'I am not worthy for you to enter my home'
      (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 8.8)

  c. тъгда привѣсѧ   къ немоу дѣти   да   рѫцѣ възложитъ на нѧ
      then brought.AOR.3PL to him children SUBJ hands put.3SG   on them
      'then they brought children to him so that he may put his hands on them'
      (*Codex Marianus*, Matthew 19.13)

Under the standard syntactic approaches to fronted topics, stemming from the seminal paper in Rizzi (1997), such items occupy a high structural position within the left periphery of the clause, situated just below the CP projection.[11]

(40)   [CP   [TopicP   [TP   [vP   [VP]]]]]

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[11] Rizzi uses the label Force Phrase to refer to the highest syntactic projection that hosts complementizers, but here we will stick to the more traditional CP label. The representation in (40) does not feature all the syntactic projections from Rizzi's cartography, but only those that are relevant for the present analysis.

Therefore, the fact that fronted topics such as своѭ доушѫ 'his soul' in (39a) or въ домъ мои 'in my home' in (39b) occurred after the item *da* indicates that the latter was situated under the highest C-head. A clause such as the one in (39a) would thus correspond to the syntactic representation in (41):

(41) [CP C да [TopicP своѭ доушѫ [TP [vP [VP положитъ за дроугъı]]]]]

However, a syntactic configuration similar to the ones in (39) is no longer possible in Bg, because the modern variant of the language does not allow any syntactic constituents (other than clitics) to intervene between the item *da* and the embedded verb (Krapova 2001, Ivanova 2018 etc.).[12] Thus, for instance, when we have an independent subject in the subjunctive clause, the latter must either precede *da* or appear in a post-verbal position.

(42)   *Искам*   (*Иван*) *да*   (**Иван*) *дойде* (*Иван*).
       want.1SG I.   SUBJ   I.   come   I.
       'I want Ivan to come.'

I will argue that this is because the item *da* was reanalyzed during the diachronic evolution of Bg and re-merged under a lower structural position-namely the *v*-head.[13]

(43)

Reanalysis

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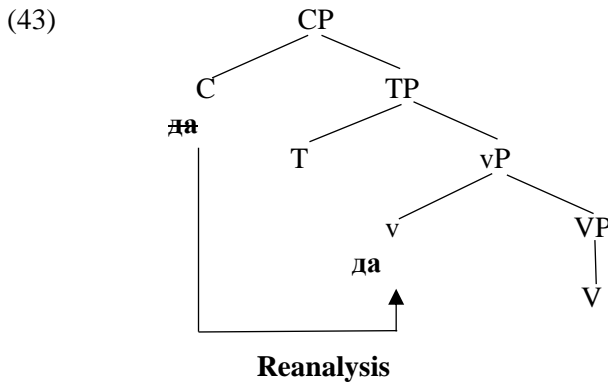
[12] In fact, this is another syntactic property that is shared between Balkan languages in general (Rivero 1994, Turano 1994, Giannakidou 2009, Roussou 2010, Cotfas 2011 etc.).
[13] A different version of this analysis was proposed in Sočanac (2024). The present analysis is better able to account for the observed data.

As a result of the reanalysis in (43), the item *da* became syntactically contiguous to the lower verb under V, which explains why no syntactic constituent can intervene between *da* and the embedded verb in Modern Bg.

4.2. Spread of *da*-constructions to obligatory control environments

While the analysis in (43) can account for the different syntactic positioning of the item *da* in relation to the embedded verb from a diachronic perspective, what still needs explaining is how the subjunctive constructions headed by this item were able to spread to control contexts previously occupied by infinitives. In order to explain this, I will first appeal to other, more comprehensive analyses of clausal complementation, in particular the approaches put forward in Ramchand and Svenonius (2014) and Wurmbrand and Lohninger (2023).

Ramchand and Svenonius (2014) developed an analysis in terms of 'Implicational Complementation Hierarchy', whereby they divided clausal complements into 3 broad categories: (i) *propositions*; (ii) *situations*; and (iii) *events*. *Propositional complements* exhibit most independent clausal properties, both when it comes to tense (they can denote all types of temporal relations with respect to the matrix tense) and when it comes to embedded subject licensing (they introduce an independent subject with free reference). *Situational complements* present a more mixed picture. Their tense is more dependent on the matrix tense (they tend to introduce a future-oriented interval with respect to matrix tense) but they also feature some independent temporal content (i.e. their tense is not identical to the matrix tense). They also exhibit more restrictions on the embedded subject but they do not involve obligatory subject control. Finally, *event complements* are most dependent and anaphoric to the matrix clause – their tense is identical to the matrix tense and their (empty PRO) subject is obligatorily controlled by the matrix subject. Wurmbrand and Lohninger (2023) argued that these distinctions are correlated to the size of the embedded syntactic structure: propositions involve largest structures and correspond to CP domains; situations introduce smaller TP structures; and events involve the smallest, vP structures. The latter are selected by subject-control predicates such as *can, must, begin, try* etc.

If we adopt the syntactic approach in Wurmbrand and Lohninger (2023), the correlation between the *da* reanalysis in (43) and its spread to obligatory-control complements that have previously featured infinitives becomes clear.[14] When the item *da* was merged under the high C-head in Old

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[14] I will not provide independent evidence for the syntactic analysis in Wurmbrand and Lohninger (2023) in this paper due to space constraints. See the cited paper, as well as

Bg, it could not spread to these types of complements since the latter involved small vP domains and did not project a CP layer where *da* could be hosted. However, once the reanalysis in (43) took place and *da* was re-merged under the lower *v*-head, it could freely spread to vP domains involving obligatory control and replace infinitives in this context. The diachronic stage in which we observed competing use between infinitives and *da*-subjunctives in subject-control complements (which roughly spanned the whole Middle Bg period) thus corresponded to a stage where both the high *da* and the low *da* were still featured in Bg grammar. Additional evidence for this analysis can be gauged if we look at data from Modern Serbian (Sr), which still features both of these instances of the item *da* in its grammar.[15]

Sr features the high C-variant of *da* in non-control subjunctive complements which contain an independent subject. As a result, the embedded subject can freely intervene between the item *da* and the embedded verb in such clauses.

(44) a. *Hoću* **_da___ _Ivan_ _dođe_**.
　　　 want.1SG　SUBJ　I.　　come.3SG
　　　 'I want Ivan to come.'

　　 b. *Predlažem* **_da___ _svi_ _skupa___ _odemo_** *u kino*.
　　　 suggest.1SG　　SUBJ　all　together　　go.1PL　in cinema
　　　 'I suggest that we all go to the movies together.'

On the other hand, the low *v-da* variant is postulated in control complements in Sr, where no syntactic constituent can intervene between the item *da* and the embedded verb, just like in Modern Bg.

(45) a. *Moram* **_da_** *(*sutra)* **_dođem_** *(sutra)*.
　　　 must.1SG　SUBJ　tomorrow　come.1SG　tomorrow
　　　 'I must come tomorrow.'

　　 b. *Počinjem da* *(*pravo) studiram* *(pravo)*.
　　　 begin.1SG　SUBJ　law　　study.1SG　law
　　　 'I am beginning to study law.'

Wurmbrand et al. (2020), or Sočanac (2017; 2018) for more syntactic evidence in this context.

[15] Serbian is distinguished from Croatian in this context because it can employ both infinitives and *da*-subjunctives in subject-control complements, as shown in (46-47), whereas Croatian speakers typically only accept infinitive uses in such clauses. This is one of the few major grammatical differences between standard Serbian and Croatian.

As a related pattern, Sr can still employ both infinitives and *da*-subjunctives in obligatory-control contexts.[16]

(46) a. *Moram   učiti*.
　　　 must.1SG   study-INF
　　 b. *Moram   da   učim*.
　　　 must.1SG   SUBJ   study.1SG
　　　 'I must study.'

(47) a. *Počinjem   voziti   auto*.
　　　 begin.1SG   drive-INF car
　　 b. *Počinjem   da   vozim   auto*.
　　　 begin.1SG   SUBJ   drive.1SG car
　　　 'I am beginning to drive a car.'

Present-day Sr thus exhibits very similar complementation patterns in subject-control contexts as Middle Bg.

5. Infinitive loss and Balkan sprachbund

While the analysis presented so far provided a diachronic syntactic mechanism accounting for the loss of infinitives and their replacement with *da*-constructions in Bg, we have still not reached a full and comprehensive explanation of the observed phenomena in this context. Assuming that the replacement of infinitives by subjunctives was enabled by the syntactic reanalysis of the *da*-item proposed in (43), the question that still remains open is what motivated this re-analysis in the first place. Here I will put forward some speculative proposals that were advanced in the previous Balkan literature in this context.

As noted in §3, the replacement of infinitives by subjunctives in obligatory-control environments was an atypical diachronic development from a cross-linguistic perspective, which was mostly limited to the languages of the Balkan-sprachbund contact area.[17] This was an exceptional

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[16] While this is true of standard Sr, it is not the case in all Sr dialects, in particular the Torlak dialect spoken in southern Serbia. The speakers of this dialect can no longer employ infinitives in complements such as those in (46-47) but only use finite subjunctives, thus exhibiting a fully Balkanized, Bg-type pattern in this context (Mirić 2018, Sobolev et al. 2023). In terms of the present syntactic analysis, we can say that Torlak speakers only postulate the innovative, lower *v-da* in their grammar, just like their Bg counterparts.

[17] A similar development was also noted in some South-Italian varieties, such as Calabrian, Neapolitan or Salentino. These dialects also tend to employ finite complements in the types of control environments that were discussed here (Calabrese 1993; Ledgeway 1998;

development because it went against some well-observed principles of language economy, in particular the tendency to avoid redundant linguistic representations. In effect, the use of finite subjunctives in subject-control complements involves a redundant repetition of inflectional φ-features associated with the subject both on the matrix and on the embedded verb. This is why the cross-linguistic drift from non-finite to finite structures described in §3 did not affect these types of syntactic environments. Nevertheless, some factor (or a confluence of factors) specific to the Balkan-sprachbund context seemed to override the cross-linguistic tendency to avoid redundancy in language and favored the development of redundant structures of the type we observed throughout this paper.

Authors such as Rozentsveig (1976) or Hauge (Хауге / Hauge 1977) have connected the infinitive loss and its replacement with finite complements observed in most Balkan languages to the broader historical and socio-linguistic context of the Balkan region. The Balkans were characterized by intense and pervasive multilingualism during long historical periods, providing a linguistic setting where speakers would often communicate in non-native languages (Friedman and Joseph 2025). Rozentsveig (1976) advanced the notion of *Kompromissprache* in this context, i.e. a language system whose grammatical features were adapted in a way to facilitate communication between non-native speakers. He argued that the relative transparency of subjunctives as compared to infinitives (e.g. the former clearly exhibit the person and number features of the verb, unlike the latter) contributed to easier language processing by speakers with imperfect grasps of the grammars of different languages, and were thus preferred by such speakers even in those context where the use of finite clauses led to redundancy. Hauge (Хауге / Hauge 1977) went a step further and argued that it was precisely this redundancy that facilitated the processing of non-native utterances, thus favoring the use of finite subjunctives over infinitives in control environments. While these accounts remain speculative and non-definitive, they provide some promising avenues for future work that should be further developed on a deeper theoretical level.

6. Conclusion

The paper provided a diachronic and formal analysis of the infinitive vs *da*-subjunctive competition patterns observed during the history of Bg. The

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Lombardi 1997). However, this is likely not a separate diachronic development but an extension of Balkan-sprachbund phenomena, as convincingly argued by Rohlfs (1972), given the fact that the speakers of these dialects have been affected by long-standing historical contacts with Greek (Griko) speakers in southern Italy.

loss of infinitives and their replacement with da-subjunctives in this language was caused by a confluence of broader typological developments and local language-contact pressures characteristic of the Balkan-sprachbund area. On the one hand, the loss of the Bg infinitive in non-control environments was a result of a cross-linguistic drift from non-finite to finite structures, which affected a wide range of typologically diverse languages. On the other hand, the replacement of infinitives by subjunctives in obligatory-control environments was a local Balkan development, having to do with the specific language-contact pressures that were at play in the multi-lingual settings of the Balkan region. While the analysis presented here should illuminate certain aspects of the phenomenon under study, this subject is far from being exhausted and much future work remains to be done.

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