

Book Review

Zuzanna Topolińska, *Polish ~ Macedonian, Grammatical Confrontation: The Development of Grammatical Categories.* Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2008, 218 pp.

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The eighth volume of the series *Polish ~ Macedonian, Grammatical Confrontation* entitled “The Development of Grammatical Categories” was published in 2008 by the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts. The subject of interest in this series of publications is the typological confrontation on a synchronic and diachronic level between the Macedonian and Polish language. In the volume in question, the author deals with the historical development of grammatical categories and, in particular, with the differences between these two languages.

The volume has 219 pages and the contents are divided into 10 chapters. Apart from these 10 main parts, there is an introduction, and introductory and concluding notes. At the end, there are extended résumés in Polish and English, as well as a list of references.

At the very beginning, in the so-called introductory notes, the author shares her understanding of the concepts she deals with in the text. So, when she uses the term *grammaticalised information*, she refers to “information which in a single class of morpho-syntactic constructions has obligatory predictable exponents of a morphological and/or morpho-syntactic nature.” Furthermore, when she uses the term *grammatical category*, she refers to “a semantic category with a grammaticalised

nucleus, i.e. a semantic category whose most important elements for the act of verbal communication have regular and predictable exponents.” Grammatical categories function at sentence level, and there are the so-called verbal categories (tense, aspect, modality) as well as those at the level of the noun phrase called nominal categories (gender, number, case, etc.). In the text, analysis is carried out at sentence level through the formula offered by S. Karolak in an academic Polish grammar¹:

M {T&L [p(a₁, a₂, a₃...)]}

Here, M is a modal component (expressing the speaker’s attitude towards the conveyed message), T is a temporal and L a spatial component, whereas **p** marks the constitutional predicate, and **a₁, a₂, a₃...** marks its arguments.

Each of the subsequent chapters is dedicated to a single category and is conceptualised in the same manner. First of all, in part 1, basic notes on the category are given; in part 2, information is given, “knowledge” is shared on the status of that category in the Common Slavic language, that is, there is consideration given to both languages in their mutual origin. This starting position further enables emphasis on the innovative processes that have developed in the diasystems of both languages treated. Then follows an analysis of the Macedonian language (part 3) mainly divided into two parts: a) the volume of the grammaticalised information and b) the evolution of the grammatical exponents. This same organisational pattern is applied in part 4 where the Polish language is analysed. The organisation of information in this manner enables a review of both directions in the grammatical evolution: the pragmatic-semantic one and the formal one. In the last part, part 5, conclusions are brought forth that refer to the main divergent processes in the Macedonian and Polish language in the broader Slavic and Balkan context.

The first chapter deals with the category of *aspect*. This category in the Slavic languages is inherited from Common Slavic and is partially grammaticalised. The opposition of the suffixes *-nè-* for perfective and

¹ S. Karolak, “Składnia wyrażen predykatywnych,” in Z. Topolińska, ed., *Gramatyka współczesnego języka polskiego, Składnia* (Warszawa: PWN, 1984), pp. 11–211.

-aje- for imperfective verbs has played a key role in the grammaticalisation of the aspect opposition.² The information transmitted by the exponents of the *aspect* category is information on the internal temporal structure of the event. In the Macedonian language, development went towards solidifying the word-formative and lexicalising character of the aspect opposition. This development of the aspect category is very similar to that in the Polish language. Differences can mainly be found in a) the functional overload of the verb forms depending on their aspectual characteristic; b) the influence of the aspectual characteristic of a single verbal lexeme on the limitations on the derivation of certain word forms belonging to that lexeme; and c) aspectual exponents. The Macedonian language appears to be more innovative as a result of the influence of the non-Slavic Balkan languages and its late standardisation.

The second category dealt with is the category of *modality*. Modality is understood as information on the status of the conveyed message from two aspects – whether or not it is true or the sender suspects its veracity (epistemological modality) and whether or not it contains the sender’s wish to influence the existing state (deontic modality). The key component in organising the modal information is the +/- opposition of factuality, that is, whether it speaks of facts (events from the present or the past) or of plans and wishes. The subject of interest in this text is regular modal finite verbal paradigms that convey information on non-factual events. These are the imperative/prohibitive, the potential and the conditional, the category of *readiness* (готовность), the category of “renarrative” (non-confirmative, distance), and the subjunctive. The system of grammaticalised modal meanings is less rich in the Polish language and therefore closer to Common Slavic. The differences between the two languages are mainly visible in the subjunctive, readiness, and the non-confirmative (or “renarrative” in Macedonian terminology), which in Macedonian have their own exponents, are not always entirely grammaticalised, and are mostly developed under the influence of the non-Slavic Balkan languages.

2 J. Kuryłowicz, “Miejsce aspektu w systemie koniugacyjnym,” *Studia językoznawcze* (1987), pp. 185–190.

The category of *tense* has a pragmatic-semantic character and a function of placing events on the time axis. The text analyses the category of *tense* whose exponents are finite verb forms. The author differentiates between an *absolute* and a *relative* time whose divergent point is the *point of reference* (the point on the time axis according to which the event is placed in time). If this point coincides with the time of speaking, then the time is absolute, and if it does not, then the time is relative. In relation to absolute time, the main difference in both languages is seen in the system of past tenses (in Polish, the old synthetic past tenses are lost and substituted by the preterite based on the old *esse*-perfect; Macedonian maintains the aorist and the imperfect, and there is also a so-called past indefinite tense – a variant of the *esse*-perfect – and a *habere*-perfect under Balkan influence). In relation to relative time, the differences are not so great. The only paradigm for expressing this type of time, the plusquamperfect, in Macedonian is becoming extinct, whereas in Polish, it is already lost.

The next category is that of *degree*. It is a grammaticalised segment of the broader category of *comparison* and refers to the so-called *parametric predicates*. Such predicates are, for example, “growth,” “weight,” “length,” “colour,” “kindness,” etc. and very frequently have an adjectival form. The grammatical exponents of “degree” in Macedonian have undergone significant change and simplification under the Balkan influence – the inherent suffixation in the comparative is lost and there is a generalisation of the prefixation for the derivation of the comparative and the superlative. Unlike Macedonian, the Polish language has not moved away from the Common Slavic system of gradation. The minimal changes mainly concern the distribution of suffixes in the comparative.

In the words of the author herself, she takes the category of *case* somewhat “unorthodoxly.” Traditionally, this category is used for a morphological form of the noun that is changeable depending on the syntactic function. The category presented here is seen as a syntactic relation between the noun phrase and the syntactic construction to which it is subordinated. This definition allows for a better description of case relations in both synthetic and analytic languages. Another unorthodox element is the anthropocentric hypothesis on the semantic interpretation of this category. Namely, according to the author, the case system is based

on opposition between personal and impersonal referents in the noun phrases, followed by a localisation of events. The bearer of the category of case on a formal level is the noun phrase. Also, in this context, the so-called predicates of first order, whose arguments refer to the material parts of the world, are analysed. The cases themselves are divided into adverbial (nominative, accusative, dative, instrumental, locative) and adnominal (genitive). Also as a case, we have the predicative, that is, the nominal part of the compound predicate. In relation to the amount of grammaticalised information, the differences between Macedonian and Polish are minimal and can be found in the scope of functional zones of specific cases. With regard to the evolution of the exponents, Polish is rather more conservative than Macedonian, which has developed in a Balkan linguistic environment. In Macedonian, the exponents are not of a morphological nature.

Diathesis is a semantic category entailing a change in the hierarchy of arguments. On a formal level, it reflects in the change in case relations in which argued expressions appear. A primary diathesis is one in which, in a nominative relation, the argued expression contains a referent that is a person – the agent is placed in primary position – an *active* diathesis. The other, partially grammaticalised form of diathesis is the *passive* – the object of the action is placed in the nominative relation. Between the two languages, there are significant differences expressed in the formal development of both inherent mechanisms of passivisation and the manner in which they fit the grammaticalised categorical distinctions. A further differentiation in Macedonian is one of a Balkan innovation, partially grammaticalised – the causative transformation of the inherent intransitive verbs that opens up the position of an object in an accusative case relation.

Next is the category of *person*, which is of a deictic nature and informs of the participants in a speech act. It is the person author/sender of the text, or the first person and the person addressee of the text, or the second person. The basic linguistic exponents of these two “persons” are of a lexical nature – personal pronouns for the first and the second person. The third inactive participant in the speech act is defined as a “non-person.” As a subcategory of the category of *person*, we have the category of “appeal” – a situation in which the author of the text directly

addresses the addressee by using the so-called vocative form of the specific noun phrase. With finite verb forms, person agreement is expressed by certain personal suffixes in both languages. These suffixes for the first and the second person carry a sufficient amount of information, and supplementary pronominal phrases are therefore not required. Their incidental presence marks a certain contrast or expression. On a formal level, the personal pronouns indicate a suppletivism of the morphological case forms; they are neutral in relation to the category of *gender* and have an atypical relation to the category of *number*. A subject of interest in this text is also the so-called impersonal constructions. Macedonian, with regard to this category, does not show great changes in the amount of grammaticalised information. The situation is similar in the Polish language as well. The development of relations among members of the person and appeal paradigms is largely dependent upon extra-linguistic factors. In Polish, there are more variants especially in the ways of addressing and the inventory of secondary constructions, which imply a personal agent that does not appear on the surface of the text.

Another semantic category is the category of *gender*. It marks a classification of “parts of the world” according to their characteristics that in a given culture are deemed relevant. The grammaticalisation of this category shows that noun phrases receive regular formal exponents that signalise to which class a certain object belongs. The author uses also the category/concept of “congruent gender” – gender as a paradigmatic category of adjectives. This chapter introduces a new division of paragraphs due to the absence of correlation between biological and formal gender, so paragraph 1 is entitled “Grammatical Mechanisms of Coding Biological Gender,” and 2, “The Evolution of Exponents in Congruent Gender.” The conclusion with regard to this category is that despite the great differences in the grammatical organisation of the nominal system in both languages in question, they do show a great amount of resemblance when it comes to “gender.”

The grammatical category of *number* grammaticalises the semantic category that can be defined as a quantitative evaluation of material objects and events. When it comes to this type of evaluation, the opposition between *one entity* and *a multitude of entities* is of importance. The multitude can be *countable* or *uncountable*, and the countable can further be

quantitative or *collective*. This category is an imminent feature of every noun phrase and at the morphological level, it is expressed as a grammaticalised opposition between *singular* and *plural*. Also, there is emphasis on the strictly marked place of quantitative markers in the linear order of the noun phrase – they are placed between the referential quantifiers that come first in the noun phrase and the so-called nuclear noun phrase, for example, *mie **nem** избрани книги / tych **pięć** wybranych ksiąg*. Polish is less distant from Common Slavic than Macedonian, but the general developmental tendencies are still quite similar – they move towards a simplification of the formal system. One of those simplifications is the loss of the dual paradigm. The main differences occur in relation to the lexical exponents of this category, cardinal numbers, whereas there are no differences with ordinal numbers. Some occurrences characteristic to both languages are the secondary categories of the “collective” and “quantitative” plural in Macedonian, and in Polish, the formation of the masculine-personal gender paradigm. Here, just like before, the specifics of the Macedonian development are pointed out.

The final category considered in this volume is the category of *definiteness*. Definiteness – or the referential characteristic, as the author calls it – is a pragmatic category that enables the identification and/or individualisation of participants in an event. Its exponents provide identification of the objects referred to in the discourse. With regard to definiteness, the referents of noun phrases can be: *identified* (for example, *Оваа книга / Овие книги ни се од голема помош* [This book/These books are of great help]); defined by *individualisation* (for example, *Една кола / Некои коли застанале пред зградата*) [A car/Some cars are outside the building]); used as *adscription* (for example, *Брат ми е учител* [My brother is a teacher]); or used *generically* (for example, *Орелот е птица; Орлите се птици* [The eagle is a bird/Eagles are birds]). As lexical exponents, we have personal and demonstrative pronouns, that is, indefinite pronouns and, in certain contexts, cardinal numbers. Personal names are, by their own nature, defined. Their mutual syntactic characteristic is that they appear at the beginning of the noun phrase. In some languages (Macedonian), as exponents at the morphological level, we have inflectional morphemes. Referential exponents primarily indicate objects from metalinguistic reality, and secondarily,

in the text (anaphoric and cataphoric reference). They also serve for topicalisation of the text. From the Slavic languages, only Macedonian and Bulgarian have the grammatical category of inflection, again, as a result of the Balkan surroundings. Out of the so-called “triple inflection” in Macedonian, only one (-ot) has a genuine inflective function. The other two (-ov, -on) function as clitics of the corresponding demonstratives. Polish is one of the languages in which the exponents of referential quantification are of a lexical (demonstrative or indefinite pronouns) or a syntactic nature (linearisation).

In the concluding notes, the author states that after the analysis was conducted, her original hypothesis that proved – the process of grammaticalisation, which functions in different semantic categories, mostly affects those segments that contribute the most to a successful realisation of the communicative act. More marginal contents are expressed by lexical means. One of the problems involved in the analysis is the manner in which the /+ human/ feature is coded in the language. The thesis that this information is at the top of the communicative hierarchy is also confirmed. According to the author, the two main reasons for the divergent development in Macedonian and in Polish are first, the late standardisation of the contemporary Macedonian written language and second, the multilingual environment in which the Macedonian diasystem has developed.

The book abounds in a great amount of data that unfortunately cannot be presented individually in such a short account. It offers a wealth of information on grammar, grammaticalisation and, generally, on understanding language in a sometimes not quite orthodox manner. This information becomes even more abundant when considered in such a context – that is, confrontationally. Confrontational analysis of these two languages can, in the words of the author herself, “be useful when setting the framework of a general typology of the Slavic languages.” But, also, in general, for a better view of the position of one language, it is better to be seen from another’s perspective. I highly recommend this book to any Slavic scholar as well as to the wider public.