

ZBIGNIEW RUSEK  
Polish Academy of Sciences, Cracow

## EXPRESSION OF THE *FUTURE* IN BULGARIAN, MACEDONIAN AND SERBO-CROATIAN IN COMPARISON WITH ENGLISH. MODALITY OR TEMPORALITY

This paper discusses the problem of the future tense in Bulgarian, Macedonian and Serbo-Croatian in comparison with English. The problem of the future is, as it is shown in the article, strictly connected to the problem of modality. The modal element can occur on the surface structure of the future forms, like in Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, English and Romanian (the last language is not a subject of this work), or can be absent on the surface (like in Polish). The structure of the "Balkan" future is similar to the English future, but English is characterized by more numerous ways of creation of this tense. Some of the structures, as shown in the article, have a "pure" future meaning – without of the semantic component of modality. The use of the present tense as a future occurs more frequently in English, but in Bulgarian (especially in the literary language) the present in that function can be used too. Thus, we can assert that the semantic structure of the future in these languages has its reflexion on the surface, namely, the constructions containing any modal auxiliary verb (mainly in English) are marked, but the construction without any modal verb (e.g. Simple Present as a Future, Immediate Future) are unmarked. The main difference between Balkan Slavonic languages and English is a number of ways of creation of the future.

The category of tense is one of the most important verbal categories. This category expresses the temporal relation of the moment of the action, with respect to the moment of speaking expressed in the sentence. Normally, the main opposition in temporal relations is the opposition between past and non-past (present). Contrary to the present and the past, the future tense has not only a temporal relation, but it also contains a considerable modal component, because no action in the future can be treated as real, like the present or past actions. Hence in many Indo-European languages, the form which functions in the present-day as a future develops from the forms which functioned in the history of those languages as a modal structures (Polański 1993: 169)<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, the modal element is not always present in surface structure of forms which express the future. In languages like Polish (and the majority of the Slavonic languages) this element is not present on the surface, but in some languages, like Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian, English and Romanian (the last one is not a subject of this article) the component of modality is present on the surface structure.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the example for the futurum, which came from the conjunctive mood are the Latin forms *legam*, *leges*. As for contemporary languages, 2 types of the future in Romanian are created from the subjunctive, but it is a compound *o + conjunctive* form, or the auxiliary verb *a avea* 'to have' (conjugated) + the subjunctive of the lexical verb. Another form of the future in Romanian is the Balkan future.

The future in the contemporary Indo-European languages is a compound form, but its structure is not equivalent in all of these languages. In the Slavonic languages there is more than one way of creation of the future. The most common way is a *perfective aspect as a future* – it is characteristic of the now extinct Old Church Slavonic and the Western Slavonic and Eastern Slavonic languages. Parallel to the simple future (in the form of the perfective aspect as a future) in the Western Slavonic and Eastern Slavonic languages functions a second form of the future – non-perfect future. That is a compound form, created by the future form of the auxiliary *być* ‘to be’ and the infinitive (or the past active participle with l-ending) of the conjugated (lexical) verb. This kind of future is also characteristic of the Slovenian. In the Southern Slavonic languages (apart from Slovenian, as I have just mentioned) there is neither a simple future (in form of a perfective aspect) nor a future created by the auxiliary *być*.

The Slavs, inhabiting the Balkan Peninsula express the future in another way, namely, by a form which contains the auxiliary verb with a meaning ‘to want, to will’ < Common Slavonic \**chotěti*, *chot’q* and the infinitive of the conjugated verb. This kind of future existed in Old Church Slavonic (the auxiliary: ХОТѢТИ, ХОЦЖ), nevertheless, this form of the future was encountered rather rarely in the manuscripts, and the auxiliary verb was conjugated. The most frequent way of expressing the future in Old Church Slavonic was, as I have mentioned above, the perfective aspect. In this language there are also forms of the future created by the auxiliary НАУЪНЖ (conjugated in the present) + infinitive and forms created by the auxiliary ИМАМЬ (also conjugated in present) + infinitive of the conjugated (lexical) verb. The future in the Slavonic languages which belong to the Balkan league presents a continuation of the Old Church Slavonic future, created by the auxiliary ХОЦЖ // ХЪЦЖ + the conjugated verb in the infinitive. Nevertheless, these future forms in the Slavonic Balkan languages have been changed. The main change is a loss of conjugation in the auxiliary (in Old Church Slavonic the auxiliary verb was conjugated, as I have mentioned above), and this verb became a future particle. The second change was a replacement of the infinitive of the conjugated (lexical) verb by the present (personal) form of this verb. Some authors (for instance Asenova 1989: 155-172) recognize this kind of future as a grammatical Balkanism, but the presence of such a structure in English (which is geographically very far from the Balkan Peninsula), challenges this theory.

The basic form for the expression of the future in contemporary Bulgarian is a structure compound of the auxiliary *ще*, which is a fossilized form of the 3rd person sg. of the verb *ша* ‘to want, to will’ and a lexical verb conjugated in the present, like: *ще ниша, ще напиша, ще отида* etc. Sometimes the future can be created in another way, namely by the fossilized form of the 3rd person sg. of the verb *ша* + a long (full) infinitive (*да* + present form) of the lexical verb, for instance *ще да ниша* (Sławski 1953: 141-142; Pashov 1989: 119). There are also other forms of the future, when both components of the form are conjugated, such as: *ща ниша, щеш нишеш, ще нише* or *ща да ниша, щеш да нишеш, ще да нише*. Here are some instances (Sławski 1953: 142):

Утре рано тя ще стане и пъргава като сърна ще иде на кладенчето за вода.  
(Elin Pelin)

Като братя си ще станат. (Christo Botew)

И две шат сълзи да капнат. (Christo Botew – quoted by F. Sławskiego in *Gramatyka języka bułgarskiego*).

The last two instances can be acknowledged as archaisms. They are very rare.

Some authors (Andreychin 1942: 250-251; Sławski 1953: 143) speak of a “czas przyszły niepewny” (uncertain future), which is created by the conjugated auxiliary *ща* and a short infinitive (infinitive stem) of the lexical verb, like *писа ща, писа, щеш, писа ще ...*. According to these authors, such forms are used only exceptionally and merely in the folk poetry. Andreychin asserts that these forms are used only in poetry, and its occurrence is prompted by rhymes and rhythm of a poem, as in the following instance:

*Тъ пиятъ ... Въ пиянство щатъ лесно забрави  
 Преишни неволи и днешни беди  
 Въ кипящето вино щатъ споменъ удави  
 заспа ще духъ болень въ разбити гърди.*

(P.P. Slaveykov – quoted by Andreychin in his Grammar. I quote their instances in the original old spelling).

Contrary to other forms expressing the future in Bulgarian, in which the auxiliary verb precedes the lexical (conjugated) verb, in the “uncertain” future (“czas przyszły niepewny”), the auxiliary can stand both before and after the lexical verb. It is only dependent on stress and use any enclitic forms.

According to F. Sławski, this “uncertain future” is: “czas oznaczający czynność przyszłą, której wykonanie (w przeciwieństwie do czasu przyszłego zwykłego) jest tylko możliwe, mniej lub więcej niepewne a nawet może mieć znacznie zbliżone do trybu warunkowego” (a tense denoting a future action, e.a. situation when the effecting of this action is only possible, but not certain, and; this form may also have a meaning close to the conditional mood). Nevertheless, we cannot agree with Sławski’s assertion, because the future always expresses a more or less uncertain action. Thus, Andreychin’s assertion is more convincing: “В хронологичното отношение тези форми представят действия по същия начин, по който ги представя и обикновено бъдеще време” (in the temporal relations these forms present actions in the same way as the ordinary future).

In contemporary Bulgarian, as I have mentioned above, the future tense very often has a meaning of modality. It can be an expression of potential readiness, for instance in conditional sentences, as in the following example: *Ако има чета нова, и аз ще вляза в нея* (Wazow), where the meaning of the future is close to the conditional mood. Sometimes the future can be used instead of the conditional mood: *Нож може да държи тъй в устата си и от тоя нож човек на драго сърце би умрял* – the same meaning is carried by the sentence *Нож може да държи тъй в устата си и от тоя нож човек на драго сърце ще умре* (Y. Yovkov), or: *Не съм гладен, ама ако почерпите, пийвам<sup>2</sup> едно винце* (Yovkov) = “*Не съм гладен, ама ако почерпите, ще пия едно винце*”.

<sup>2</sup> The forms *пийвам, пийваи, пийва ...* are simple forms of the conditional mood, which occurs much rarer than the compound forms. These simple forms are met only in folk-poetry (Stoyanov 1983: 369-370; Sławski 1953: 148). Another form, which functions in Bulgarian as a conditional mood is the future in the past (futurum praeteriti, *бъдеше в миналото*). The Future in the Past also functions as the conditional mood in English (where, factually there is no other form for conditional, expectationally the form of the auxiliary verb *to be – were* (the last form functions both as a conditional mood, and as a past tense of the verb *to be*).



In a defined context (consituation) the future in Bulgarian (and not only in Bulgarian, which as be observed below) the future tense can express even an imperative modality (obviously only, when the verb is in the 2nd person sg.): *Самуил отвърна очи от него и се обърна към готвача: – Ще приготвиш само едно ядене* (D. Talev). *Когато излезе, ще го следиш неотстъпно чак до влака* (B. Raynov).

Sometimes the future form (especially of the auxiliary verb *съм* 'to be') factually expresses a present action, as in the example *Умен човек ще е — каза Зарев и побутна с лакът Синигера в хълбока* (K. Kristev; cf. Stoyanov 1983: 343-344).

The way the future is created in Macedonian is similar to the procedure for Bulgarian. The only difference is the form of the future particle (which is a fossilized form of the auxiliary), which in Macedonian is *ќе* (it has been caused by a different development of the Common Slavonic group \*tj, \*dj in Macedonian). As in Bulgarian, the lexical verb is conjugated: *ќе одам, ќе одиш..., ќе влезам, ќе влезеш...,* like in the following example: *Што брзаш, зар не ќе застаниш малу со мене* (R. Petkowski).

There is also another way in which of the future may be created in Macedonian, namely the combination of the auxiliary verb *имам* 'to have' and the infinitive of the lexical verb (in Macedonian so-called *да-конструкција*; cf. Koneski 1981: 487), for instance *Тие има да дојдат утре*.

These forms also occur in Bulgarian, for instance *има да чакам, има да страдаш*, but they are encountered very rarely, and they are regarded as colloquial. These forms usually mean a durative, long-lasting action in the future. As was mentioned at the beginning of the paper, these forms are the continuation of the Old Church Slavonic future, created by the auxiliary verb **ИМАМЪ**.

The Serbo-Croatian future is also created in the "Balkan" way. These constructions are very close to the so-called "uncertain" future in Bulgarian, namely the auxiliary verb is conjugated and the lexical verb is in a form of the infinitive. The auxiliary in the ordinary, spoken language is shortened (*ću, ćeš, će, ćemo, ćete, ћи* instead of *hoću, hoćeš, hoće, hoćemo, hoćete, hoću*), except for the situation when it is used in an interrogative sentence, when it occurs in a full (strong, long) form. With the exception of the question sentences, the auxiliary comes after the lexical verb (as in the "uncertain" Bulgarian future). The infinitive of the lexical (conjugated) verb is normally shortened, for instance *čuvat ћи, čuvat ćeš* or even *čivaću, čivaćeš ...*. Some Serbian linguists, like Stevanović (1969: 646-647), assert that the future is a category including a modal nuance – "*Футур је глаголско време, које означава да ће се нека радња вршити или извршити... после времена у коме се говори, или на које се мисли. И мада оно, што ће бити у будућности још није реализовано, што свакоме футуру даје нијансу модалности...*". This assertion is quite warranted, because no action (state) in the future cannot be recognized as a fact – it is only an assumption, expectation, or intention. Examples:

*На гробу ће изнићи цвијеће за далеко неко покољење.  
Причаћемо, а имамо доста.*

The expression of the future in English is much more diversified. Some authors, like F. R. Palmer (1965), think that there is no morphological determinant of the future in

English<sup>3</sup>. Other authors assert that the majority of future forms in English have a nuance of modality. The latter assertion is by certainly warranted, because, as I have mentioned above, futurity is never sure and real, hence the future must have at least a nuance of modality. Nevertheless, as it will be shown below, some forms which function as a future in English have no modal component in their surface structure.

As I have mentioned above, there are many ways for the expression of the future in present-day English. Werker (1976) writes in his monograph about 5 basic ways in which the future may be created, though factually the number of future forms is greater. The basic form of the future – the construction which contains the auxiliary verb *will* (for the 1st person sg. and pl. *shall*) + the basic form of the lexical verb, has a structure equivalent to that of the future in the Balkan Slavonic languages. The auxiliaries (both *will* and *shall*) were originally modal verbs, like the auxiliary of the future of the South Slavonic languages. Originally those verbs (*willan*, *sculan*) were lexical verbs, subsequently they became modal verbs, and in Middle-English (according to Werker's work, *shall* from the end of the 14th century, *will* in late middle-English) they began to function (simultaneously) as auxiliaries of the future. In the subsequent period (17th century), the auxiliary *shall* of the future tense for the 2nd and 3rd person was replaced by the auxiliary *will*. The auxiliary *will* in present-day English is used also in the 1st person (sg. and pl.), and, in this case (contrary to the forms created by the auxiliary *shall*), this form has a strong modal (volitive) overtone, as in the example *I will never buy any radio*. In the case when the auxiliary of the future in the 1st person is the verb *shall*, the form has a "pure" future meaning, though sometimes it can express an intention or obligation, as in the sentence *I shall go to bed*.

For interrogative sentences, the future form created by the auxiliary *will* in the 1st person has a "pure" future meaning, with no modal nuance. The forms of the 1st person future (sg. and pl.) created by the auxiliary *shall* may express either the future, and can be strongly modally overtone – they may express an obligation, as in the sentence *Shall I do it* 'Do you want me to do it'.

The future form for the 2nd person created by the auxiliary *will* expresses a "pure" future, but the form created by the verb *shall* (used relatively rarely in present-day English) is strongly marked with the modality – it express a firm order or threat, as in: *You shall give me back my money by Saturday*, or a promise: *You shall have it next week*.

The interrogative forms of the future for the 2nd person created by the auxiliary verb *will* express both the "pure" future and the future with a modal nuance, but the forms created by the verb *shall* are volitive.

The forms of the future for the 3rd person (sg. and pl.) created by the auxiliary verb *will* express a "pure" future or a future marked with modality, but the forms created by the verb *shall* express the future with a slight modal nuance (the latter occur relatively rarely, mainly in documents).

The question forms of the future for the 3rd person sg. created by the verb *will* have only a future meaning, but the forms with the auxiliary *shall* (used very rarely) are strongly

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<sup>3</sup> F. R. Palmer (1965: 65) thinks, that:

- 1) There is no morphological determinant of the future in English.
- 2) *Will* and *shall* are modal verbs
- 3) There are another way to express of the future (he quotes Werker 1976).

marked with modality – they express a request for the 2nd participant of the dialogue, to say what should be done, as in the following example: *Shall Gwen do your shopping for you?*

Generally, 78% of the cases of use the future with the auxiliary *will* are ambiguous – modality and future (according to the statistics, by Werker in his monograph on the future). The semantic component of modality can be present only in cases, when the agent (subject) is [+Hum], or [+Anim] (the same, obviously, refers to Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbo-Croatian and others languages). Volitivity may also be present when the agent is an institution or collective body, a board (college).

As was mentioned above, there are many ways of creating the future in English. One of them is the *Simple Present as a future*. This occurs (according to Werker 1976) usually in the 3rd person, and less often in the 1st and very rarely in the 2nd person. Sometimes the form of an ordinary future (created by the auxiliary *will / shall*), may be replaced by the Simple Past, but the meaning of such sentences is often modified, like in the following examples.

- a) *His new composition, to be staged at the town's Civic Hall on March 14 will take seven hours to play.*
- b) *His new composition, to be staged at the town's Civic Hall on March 14 takes seven hours to play.*

In sentence(a), the speaker underlines that the composition performed on that day (March 14) will last 7 hours on this particular performance, but in the sentence (b) it suggests that this composition *always lasts* 7 hours (and it, obviously will last the same time on March 14). Sentence (b) is marked by a semantic component of habituality, or, more exactly, omnitemporality, which is expressed on the surface by the Simple Present<sup>4</sup>.

The Simple Present very often expresses a habitual future:

*You get tea at 5 o'clock tonight*  
*The baker calls on Saturday*

The last sentence is ambiguous – it can express both the habitual present, and the habitual future.

Sometimes (as a result of habitual events), the Simple Present can express a single future action, a result of similar habitual occurrences, such as:

Single future action: *The train leaves at 7 o'clock this evening.*  
 Habitual: *The train leaves at 7 o'clock.*

In such sentences, when the future action is scheduled or habitual, the use of the Simple Past is the most opposite choice of tense.

The Simple Present as a future in also occurs English in adverbs of time, referring to the future, as in the following example:

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<sup>4</sup> The Simple Present expresses above all an omnitemporal present, and, therefore is used in assertions and. Every omnitemporal truth is expressed by the Simple Present.



*I live in London as from next week.*

*Comedian Dave Allen wears a different hat on ATV next Tuesday.*

Generally, the use of the Simple Present as a future is strictly connected with a notion of the sender's schedule, plans, sureness – it means a scheduled future action (for instance *the arrival of a train*), and, in that case, there is no semantic nuance of doubtfulness. Palmer thinks that the Simple Present occurs as a future when the lexical verb belongs to the class of the verbs of movement (motion), but some of the instances quoted above can disprove his theory. He also asserts that there are some exceptions to this theory and (that depending on context) the future can also be created in that way from other verbs.

The next way in which the future action may be expressed in English is the Present Progressive. This tense usually occurs in the 2nd person when used as a future, less often in the 3rd and very rarely in the 1st person. The basic semantic different from the Simple Present is its component of a non-perfective action<sup>5</sup>.

Some sentences, like *People are coming to dinner* can express both an action in the present and in the future. In the case, when the Present Progressive is used with an adverb of time, it always means a *future action*, as in the following instance:

*I am seeing Robert this evening.*

The next form of the future in English is the Future Progressive. This tense means a future, scheduled action, which will occur at strictly determined moment, e.g.:

*At this time tomorrow we will be writing our examination paper.*

The progressive form may also be used to neutralize volitivity in polite questions:

*Will You be coming too, Mr. Hanker?*

The sentence quoted above is only a question referring to an event in the future, but the sentence *Will you come too, Mr. Hanker?* has a strong semantic component of volitivity – in the case quoted above it can be interpreted as an invitation or request.

Another way of creating the future is the construction **be going to + infinitive**. This form of the future is very widespread in colloquial English (according to Palmer the most common one). This structure is not known either in the Slavonic languages, or in the "Balkan" languages, but the future created in a similar way occurs in French<sup>6</sup>. This kind

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<sup>5</sup> English tenses in the progressive aspect (Present Progressive, Past Progressive, Present Perfect Progressive, Past Perfect Progressive, Future Progressive, Future Perfect Progressive, Future Progressive in the Past, Future Perfect Progressive in the Past) are non-perfect. The progressive aspect expresses a durativity – non-perfectivity.

<sup>6</sup> This construction in French (the verb with the meaning 'to go' in the present + the infinitive of the lexical verb) is called the *futur proche*, which means an intermediate future action. The category of recentness (recent future and recent past) is grammaticalised in French – the recent past is expressed by the *passé récent*.

of future is very often used in colloquial, spoken language (both English and French). Sometimes the use of this future depends on context (consituation), as in the following instances:

*It is going to rain this afternoon*

(speculative – said, when there are a lot of clouds on the sky).

*It will rain this afternoon*

(said by a professional in the weather forecast).

The first sentence is based on a present situation (a lot of clouds: the symptoms of rain are visible) hence the use of the “intermediate” future. The use of this form expresses a much higher probability of a future event, and this form has no components of volitivity (modality). The meaning of the unmarked future is also visible in a surface structure of the form which does not contain any modal verb. This form is very often used to express an immediate event<sup>7</sup>, like: *I am going to vomit* (the speaker is sick).

There are also other ways of expressing of the future in English which are not described in the Werker’s monograph. These forms are compounded from more than two elements. One of them is a structure of type: *to be on the point of* + *Gerund*, as in the example:

*He is on the point of leaving England.*

Another descriptive construction of the future in English is: *to be about* + *Infinitive*:

*He is about to leave England.*

There is also other ways to express the future in compound sentences. One of them is a construction of *accusativus cum infinitivo* type in a subordinate clause (after a main clause in the present), as in the following example:

*I expect Anne to go to Sweden this year.*

The future action expressed in the sentence quoted above is strongly marked with modality.

The use of the present as a future in Bulgarian is also possible, but it occurs rarely. According to the authors of the Bulgarian grammar (Stoyanov 1983) in certain defined context, the present form may express an event in the future. The present as a future is used (according to the authors of the Grammar) mainly for stylistic reasons. Example: “Знаеш ли, как си представят нашият бъдещ живот?... Ти ставаш много богат. **Купуваме си** ние една прекрасна вила в Банкия или Княжево. **Обзавеждаме си** там хубава градинка. **Ще си купим** автомобил – аз ще го карам, ще се науча” (К. Zidarov). In the example quoted above the meaning of the future expressed by the verb in the present is apparent only in a context – it is factually the future perfect (*futurum exactum*), which express the future events preceding an action expressed by the future. Here the present means here a scheduled future action (as in English).

<sup>7</sup> The future form *be going to + infinitive* is classified by many of grammars as the “intermediate future”.



As I have mentioned in the part of this article devoted to the Macedonian future, there also exists a future form created by the auxiliary *имам* 'to have' + da-construction. This construction – the auxiliary *have* + full infinitive – also occurs in English, but its meaning is not the same. Unlike the situation in Macedonian, in English the construction is very strongly marked with modality. It expresses a duty, or even an obligation, as in the example: *Mr. Thomson has to see a doctor* = *Mr. Thomson should see a doctor*, or even *Mr. Thomson ought to see a doctor*. In the case when the subject of the sentence is in the 2nd person, it expresses even an imperative modality, as in the example: *You have to give back the money*. There are also structures in which the auxiliary verb *have* is used in a future form (*will have*), nevertheless the meaning of these structures, even when the auxiliary is in the present form, is future obligations, orders and requests concern the future.

Summing up, I can assert that the problem of the future is very strictly connected to the problem of modality, hence, in many languages, future forms are created by auxiliaries which were originally modal verbs. The Southern Slavonic (Balkan) future is close only to the "basic" type of the English future – created by the auxiliary *will / shall*. Other future structures occur more frequently in English – the present as a future occurs (because of stylistic reasons) only in Bulgarian. The construction *habeo + infinitivus* occurs in Bulgarian, Macedonian, English, but the last structure in English is much more strongly marked with modality, though, as I have mentioned above, this structure in Bulgarian also has a modal nuance. In this case the English verb *have* may be regarded not only as an auxiliary, but also as the modal verb (Palmer opts for it). In English, the present as a future (which exists also in Bulgarian, but less frequently) expresses a certain action determined by schedule, and with no nuance of modality.

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