

A case against 'defective' tense in the Bulgarian Subjunctive

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Introduction Bulgarian (BG), as well as other languages of the Balkan Sprachbund, shows apparent mismatch between the meaning of present tense in matrix clauses and in embedded subjunctive clauses, illustrated by the BG data in (1) – (4). While present tense in the matrix clause locates the event at the Speech Time (ST) or *now*, as in (1), present tense in embedded clauses can locate the embedded event after (2), before (3), or at (4) the ST. Contrary to previous analyses which assume that the interpretation of present tense in BG subjunctives differs from that of main clauses, I present a compositional semantic analysis according to which present tense in subjunctive and main clauses receives a uniform meaning.

Previous Analyses The current syntactic and semantic literature offers various mechanisms for interpretation of embedded tense, which one might try to adopt to BG. For example, one might assume that embedded tense in subjunctive complements in BG lacks any semantic content (is 'defective'), and as such is interpreted with respect to the time provided by the tense of the matrix verb. This analysis was proposed by Picallo 1985 for Romance subjunctive, and its variant was extended to BG by Krapova 2001. However, such analysis, as shown by (5), would predict overlap between the matrix and embedded events, thus making incorrect predictions for the data in (2) and (3). Another alternative would be to assume that subjunctive complements, which have replaced infinitival constructions in the Balkan languages, should be analyzed as English infinitives. Such analysis would involve an implicit forward-shifting modal, WOLL, as in (6), or some other forward-shifting mechanism (Giannakidou 2007). However, such analysis is not satisfactory either, since it predicts that the embedded event is always in the future with respect to the matrix clause event.

My proposal I present a unified analysis of present tense, which rejects the idea of 'defective' tense in the Bulgarian subjunctive. I assume that present tense is uniformly contentful but anaphoric. It is contentful in that it always signals overlap between the Reference Time (RT), and some other time interval. It is anaphoric, in that the time interval in question is identified with the ST in matrix clauses, but with some other contextually salient time in embedded clauses ((see (7))). This assumption allows not only for a uniform treatment of present tense, but for a compositional analysis, which correctly predicts the temporal location of the embedded event. In particular, I propose that the temporal relation between main and embedded clauses is encoded in the *semantics* of the selecting verbs as a relation between the Reference Times (RT) of the two predicates, where the RT should be understood in the sense of Reichenbach (1947) and Klein (1994). I further suggest that the selecting verbs can be divided into three groups, forward-shifting, back-shifting, and overlap-imposing verbs, and that the temporal dependency is encoded as $RT_{main} < RT_{embd}$ by forward-shifting verbs like *order*, as $RT_{embd} < RT_{main}$ by back-shifting verbs like *recollect*, and as $RT_{embd} = RT_{main}$ by overlap-imposing verbs like *hear* (see (8)). In the proposed analysis the temporal location of the subordinate event, i.e. the relation between the ST and the RT_{embd} , is entailed from the tense of the selecting verb and its lexical semantics, and is further restricted by the aspectual properties of the main and embedded verbs (see (9), (10)).

Conclusions The proposed analysis presents arguments against the idea of 'defective' tense in the Bulgarian subjunctive, and reexamines the concept of temporal dependency by showing that it should be encoded in the semantics of the selecting verbs rather than taken care of by some syntactic mechanisms such as anchoring. Finally, it shows that the subjunctive in BG and in other Balkan languages has different temporal properties than the subjunctive in Romance languages, which raises a question about typological status of subjunctive cross-linguistically.

