

One conditional is not like another

At a first glance, the conditional in Slavic languages appears to be very uniform. On closer inspection, however, it shows that forms differ considerably wrt. (i) the type of auxiliary involved and (ii) the range of lexical verb forms available; cf. examples from East Slavic (1), West Slavic (2), and South Slavic (3) languages, respectively:¹

(1)	a.	<i>xadzila b(y) / b(y) chadzic'</i>	Bel		d.	<i>volala by som</i>	Slk
		'(l) would go/in order to go'				'(l) would call'	
	b.	<i>počitala b(y) / b(y) počitať</i>	Rus		e.	<i>njesla bych</i>	USb
		'(l) would/in order to reverse'				'(l) would carry'	
	c.	<i>xodyla b(y) / b(y) xodyty</i>	Ukr	(3)	a.	<i>nosila bi(h)</i>	BCS²
		'(l) would go/in order to go'				'(l) would carry'	
(2)	a.	<i>přinesla bych</i>	Cze		b.	<i>kazala bix</i>	Blg
		'(l) would bring'				'(l) would say'	
	b.	<i>njasła by</i>	LSb		c.	<i>došla bi</i>	Mac
		'(l) would carry				'(l) would come'	
	c.	<i>czytałabym / by czytać</i>	Pol		d.	<i>rekla bi</i>	Slv
		'(l) would read/in order to read'				'(l) would say'	

These data reveal three descriptive classes:

- (i) Languages with a conditional **auxiliary verb** inflected for person/number which combines with ***l*-participles only**;
- (ii) Languages with a non-inflected **auxiliary particle** combining with ***l*-participles only**;
- (iii) Languages with a non-inflecting **auxiliary particle** that combines with ***l*-participles or infinitives** (and possibly further forms; cf. Garde 1963 with respect to Rus).

Following Garde (1964: 88), it shall be argued that the availability of infinitives in the analytic conditional correlates with the availability of a non-inflected auxiliary particle. Undoubtedly, such a particle is available in East Slavic languages (Bel, Rus, Ukr). Given the afore-mentioned correlation, it should, however, also be available in Pol.³

The crucial claims of this talk are:

- **Bel, Rus, Ukr** can 'afford' a non-inflected particle thanks to the fact that they have developed a new agreement pattern for the past (former perfect) tense, namely number/gender instead of person/number (cf. Junghanns 1995: 8). In fact, this new pattern renders East Slavic *l*-forms finite, i.e., their number/gender marking succeeds to license a nominative subject, provided the clause contains a covert semantic past tense (4a) or conditional mood operator/particle (4b), respectively. On the other hand, the particle – a non-verbal functional item – may as well combine with a non-agreeing infinitive, yielding an 'impersonal' structure that excludes the nominative; cf. (4b):⁴

¹ **BCS** · Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, **Blg** · Bulgarian, **Bel** · Belarusian, **Cze** · Czech, **LSb** · Lower Sorbian, **Mac** · Macedonian, **Pol** · Polish, **Rus** · Russian, **Slk** · Slovak, **Slv** · Slovene, **Ukr** · Ukrainian, **USb** · Upper Sorbian.

² Several dialects in **BCS** are described to show a conditional variant that involves a non-inflecting particle *bi* throughout the paradigm as a result of phonological processes (cf. Panzer 1967: 39; Xrakovskij 2009: 276). This new particle keeps combining with *l*-participles only. Phonological change like this are likely to be starting point of the more general language change proposed below in this abstract.

³ The same is likely to hold for Cassubian which also shows a particle (*bě*). Since the descriptions are not clear on whether this particle combines, besides with *l*-participles, also with infinitives, the language is excluded (for now).

⁴ The covert past tense operator must be in a functional, not lexical position (I^0/T^0) since the latter should facilitate the use of *esť* 'be' in emphatic contexts, as is the case in copular clauses with *esť* in V^0 (or $Pred^0$). Note

(4)	(non-verbal) particle	(finite) I-form or infinitive	East Slavic
a.	\emptyset_{PAST}	{chadzila/počitala/chodyla}	
b.	<i>b(y)</i> _{COND}	{chadzila/počitala/chodyla}	
c.	<i>b(y)</i> _{COND}	{chadzic'/počitat'/chodyty}	

- The contrary extreme is instantiated by **BCS, Blg, Cze, Slk, and USb**: They exhibit the 'classical' pattern (person/number on an overt auxiliary verb + non-finite *I*-participle), hence *neither* have tense/mood particles *nor* finite *I*-forms. The non-availability of an impersonal infinitival conditional follows straightforwardly; cf. (5):

(5)	(finite) auxiliary	(non-finite) I-participle	BCS Blg Cze Slk USb
a.	{ <i>sam/säm/jsem/sem/sym</i> } _{PAST}	{ <i>nosila/kazala/přinesla/volala/njesta</i> }	
b.	{ <i>bih/bich/bych/by sem/běch</i> } _{COND}	{ <i>nosila/kazala/přinesla/volala/njesta</i> }	

- A rather surprising picture is found in **LSb, Mac, and Slv**. These languages seem to be at an intermediate evolutionary stage between the 'classical' type just discussed and the younger East Slavic type in (4). While their past tense formation corresponds to BCS, Blg, Cze, Slk, and USb, their conditional displays a particle (*bi/by*). However, this particle never combines with an infinitive. According to the present assumptions, *bi/by* can only be a 'pseudo-particle', i.e., it is really an auxiliary verb *underspecified* for person/number. It follows that the conditional in LSb, Mac, and Slv is structurally identical to the one in (5b), with the slight difference that the auxiliary verb is underspecified as to agreement features (indicated by a null morpheme 'Ø'); cf. (6):

(6)	(finite) auxiliary	(non-finite) I-participle	LSb Mac Slv
a.	{ <i>som/sum/sem</i> } _{PAST}	{ <i>njasta/došla/rekla</i> }	
b.	{ <i>byØ/biØ</i> } _{COND}	{ <i>njasta/došla/rekla</i> }	

- **Po** shows the most peculiar properties: Its conditional can well contain an infinitive (as well as *-no/to*-forms or impersonal modals like *trzeba* 'must'), so resembles East Slavic in this respect and must have a conditional *particle* (cf. Garde 1964: 88); cf. (7c). On the other hand, **Po** also exhibits a 'personal' variant of the conditional containing an inflected auxiliary verb (*bym, byś, ...*) which combines with a non-finite *I*-participle (so **Po** has not yet developed the new 'Eastern' agreement pattern). To account for this picture, it is argued that **Po** 'rebuilds' inflecting auxiliary verbs *in syntax* by adjoining the enclitic agreement markers known from past tense formation – cf. (7a) – to the conditional particle *by* as represented in (7b):

(7)	particle(-based auxiliary)	(non-finite) I-participle or infinitive	Po
a.	$\emptyset_{\text{PAST}}=\{m/ś/...\}$	<i>czytała</i>	
b.	<i>by</i> _{COND}=\{m/ś/...}	<i>czytała</i>	
c.	<i>by</i> _{COND}	<i>czytać</i>	

In sum, the data and analysis point at language change in progress. The conditional in its cross-Slavic variation illustrates quite well, how rather slight changes (in morphonology) may lead to rather crucial changes in the grammatical system, even in such a clearly defined and seemingly uniform domain like the analytic conditional.

References Garde, P. 1963. *L'emploi du conditionnel et de la particule by en russe*. Aix-en-Provence. | Garde, P. 1964. Problèmes du conditionnel dans les langues slaves. *Revue des études slaves* 40: 85-93. | Junghanns, U. 1995. Funktionale Kategorien im russischen Satz. In Junghanns, U. (ed.), *Linguistische Beiträge zur Slawistik aus Deutschland und Österreich: II. JungslawistInnen-Treffen Leipzig 1993*. Wien, 167-203. | Panzer, B. 1967. *Der slavische Konditional*. München. | Xrakovskij, V. S. 2009. The conditional. In Kempgen, S. et al. (eds.), *The Slavic languages*. Vol. 1. Berlin, New York, 484-505.

that the diachronic loss of the present tense paradigm of *byti* 'be' in East Slavic is most likely to have led not only to the emergence of the covert past tense operator but also of the conditional particle *by*.