

V zelení drželi zelení breg

Studies in Honor of Marc L. Greenberg

Edited by

**Stephen M. Dickey &
Mark Richard Lauersdorf**

Bloomington, Indiana, 2018



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Synthetization in the Grammaticalization of the Preterit in Slovak Dialects¹

Gabriela Múcsková

Abstract: This article focuses on the emergence and development of synthetized preterit forms in marginal Slovak dialects and the interpretation of their emergence in the scope of grammaticalization, the gradualness of language change, and the role of language contacts in its extension. The introduction briefly describes the gradual grammaticalization process involving structural and semantic changes. The various degree of semantic changes resulted in four structural types of preterit in today's Slavic languages. The synthetization phase in the grammaticalization chain is represented by Polish preterit forms, but in the Slovak dialects, besides a prevailing analytical construction, there are three types of synthetized forms with the present form of the verb *be* changed into a suffix: 1) the suffixes *-m* and *-s* in the 1sg and 2sg in the northeastern dialects (*robilam, buleš*); 2) forms with the suffix *-ch* (*robila-ch*) in the 1sg, which were found in small diasporas and are highly archaic and rare; and 3) forms with the suffix *-s* in the 2sg in the southwestern dialects (*robiys, robiyas*). The character of Slovak synthetized forms corresponds to the historical state in Polish; they co-exist with analytical forms (*robila som, ja robila*) and their contemporary development is characterized by archaization and gradual loss. The final section provides several examples of how analyzing the state of a dialect, its synchronic variation, and loss of productivity of particular forms can contribute to the study of the course of historical language change.

1. The Emergence of the Perfect and Preterit in the Scope of the Grammaticalization Process

In this introductory section, I will briefly summarize the main phases of the emergence and further development of the Proto-Slavic perfect—the analytical grammatical form expressing the resultative past tense—which was gradually integrated into the system of structurally interrelated grammati-

¹ This paper is an output of the research projects “Jazyková zmena v historickom vývine jazyka a v procese formovania jeho spisovnej variety 2” (VEGA 1/0681/17) and the “Slovník slovenských nářečí” (VEGA 2/0126/18). I thank Mgr. John Peter Butler Barrer, PhD., for proofreading of the text. I also would like to express my gratitude to both reviewers for their sound commentaries and corrections.

cal forms that had a primarily past-tense function, alongside other aspectual and modal functions (Dostál 1953). In fact, there was no real “coexistence” of equally concurrently developing and functionally clearly distinguished forms. During the Proto-Slavic period, these forms were at different stages of development and had different levels of productivity, so their usage semantically and functionally overlapped and they were replaceable in some contexts (Gebauer 2007: 539). From this point of view, the perfect as a grammatical form emerged in the late Proto-Slavic period and started to be functionally productive only within the development of individual Slavic languages (cf. Stanislav 1967: 435ff; Gebauer 1909: 53; Horálek 1962: 86; Lamprecht, Šlosar, and Bauer 1986: 194).

1.1. The Emergence of the Perfect as an Analytical Grammatical Form

My interpretation of the emergence of the perfect and later general preterit grammatical form in Slovak (and closely related Slavic languages—Czech and Polish) is based on grammaticalization theory as it has been defined in works of Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva (Heine 2003; Heine and Kuteva 2004, 2005), Paul J. Hopper and Elizabeth C. Traugott (2003), Christian Lehmann (2015), and others.

In the framework of Meillet’s well-known claim about today’s morphology being preceded by yesterday’s syntax, at the beginning of the grammaticalization process there is a syntactic verbal-nominal construction consisting of two relatively independent lexical items—Indo-European deverbial adjectives with the suffix *-l* formed from intransitive verbs, which originally had a meaning ‘tendency, propensity or aptitude to do something’ (cf. Lamprecht, Šlosar, and Bauer 1986: 194–95; Damborský 1967: 128–30)², and present forms of *BE*³ in the function of a copula:

- (1) a. *spala* + *jes-mъ*
*sleep*_{L-PART.FEM.SG} *be*_{1SG}
 ‘I am the one having a tendency to sleep’
 (cf. contemporary meaning of Slovak (*o*)*spalý* [‘sleepy’])

² The meaning could be elucidated, e.g., by contemporary Slovak *bdelý* [‘wakeful’], *dbalý* [‘conscientious, or who tends to be concerned’], *jedlý* [‘eatable’] or Czech *vzteklý* [‘furious’] etc. Due to semantic derivation these forms acquired the meaning ‘the one who does something’ (Lamprecht 1987: 109), which is the basis of today’s *nomina agentis* like Slovak colloquial and Czech *čumil* [‘rubberneck’], Slovak and Czech *kecal* and Czech *žvanil* [both mean ‘gasbag’], including the animal name *mýval* [‘raccoon’] and many surnames (Damborský 1967: 12).

³ I use *BE* with capitals as a representation of all particular present forms in its paradigm.

- (1) b. padъ-l-i + jes-qtъ/jes-qtъ
 fall_{L-PART.PL} be_{3PL}
 'they are the ones having a tendency to fall'

After the deverbal adjectives had acquired a resultative participial character in the Proto-Slavic period (so called *l*-participles or preterit active participles) and were included among other participles (also former deverbal adjectives) with the formants *-nt-*, *-s-*, *-m-*, *-n-* and *-t-* (cf. Weingart 1938: 363; Zubatý 1921/1980: 52ff), the meaning of the construction with the copula *BE* had changed into the 'present state as a result or consequence of some previous action or situation':

- (2) a. spa-l-a jes-mъ
 'I am the one who has slept'
 b. padъ-l-i jes-qtъ/jes-qtъ
 'they are the ones who have fallen'
 (cf. contemporary meaning of Slovak *padlý hrdina* ['fallen hero'—soldier killed in battle])

The further development of the grammaticalization of this construction led to a reanalysis of the syntactic item to a single analytical grammatical construction with the meaning of a 'past event with a consequence in the present', i.e., the grammatical form known as the Proto-Slavic perfect:

- (3) a. spa-l-a jes-mъ
 'I have slept'
 b. padъ-l-i jes-qtъ/jes-qtъ
 'they have fallen'

The emergence of the analytical grammatical construction was accompanied by a decline or even loss of functional and semantic autonomy, a discreteness of individual components, and a rise in the abstract grammatical meaning (grameme) of the construction as a complex and indivisible item. The item further undergoes paradigmaticization and generalization in the whole category of related items (e.g., as a part of speech).

The construction kept its resultative meaning in the Proto-Slavic perfect form, but after its generalization and (due to a complex of paradigmatic factors and the rise of aspect) gradual loss of the synthetic past forms, it acquired pro-

ductivity. It took over the functions of the imperfect and aorist, and has been transformed in the Slavic languages to the general preterit.⁴

1.2. In the Background of the Process

In addition to formal and functional changes as overtly perceptible changes accompanying the process of grammaticalization, the constructions and their components underwent covert semantic changes of reanalysis and desemantization that lie at the core of the whole process.

In the case of a semantic shift accompanying the change from a syntactic construction to an analytical grammatical form, **reanalysis** is based on metonymy—a transformation of the hierarchy of categorial and subcategorial semantic components and their priority (see Table 1).

In addition to the semantic transposition based on metonymy from the ‘objective existence of the present state at the time of utterance that is a result of some preceding action’ to the ‘action preceding time of utterance’ this semantic change also includes subjectification. The objective state as a result of preceding action, which is not included in the meaning of the verbal-nominal construction, becomes interrelated with the action realized by the subject, so the action becomes a part of the meaning of the grammatical construction and is recognized from the speaker’s point of reference (cf. Dickey 2013: 85ff). During reanalysis the subject underwent a transposition from the ‘passive bearer of the state’ to the ‘active performer of the action’.

Desemantization (as one aspect of parameter of integrity in Lehmann’s model—Lehman 2015: 135ff) is evident in both components of the construction as well as in the construction as a whole. During the fulfilling of the parameters of grammaticalization, seemingly the formal structure did not change (except for sound changes related to the phonological development in particular dialects). The fundamental change is the semantic bleaching of components and the resulting functional transformation of their grammatical status—decategorization.

The original *l*-participles lost their adjectival character; they lost the noun declension and have been fossilized in nom. sg. form (Damborský 1967; Stanislav 1987: 114). From among the nominal grammatical characteristics, they have partially preserved formants in the singular forms (congruent grammatical morphemes) reflecting nominal gender. In the course of reanalysis, the

⁴ With some exceptions in Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Sorbian, in which the synthetic forms of the aorist and imperfect have been preserved, although later functionally, semantically, and formally modified. Interesting for the reconstruction of archaization and extinction processes is the situation in Serbian and Croatian, where synthetic forms, especially in urban language and in colloquial registers, have been declining in usage (cf. Horálek 1962: 225; Stieber 1979: 232) and in the contemporary language they are considered literary (Barić et al. 1995: 413).

Table 1. The Transformation of the Hierarchy of Semantic Components of the Perfect Construction

deverbal adjective with the formant <i>-l</i>	‘present state’		
syntactic construction	‘present state’	‘consequence/result’	‘past action’
analytical grammatical form of the perfect	‘present state’	‘consequence/result’	‘past action’
analytical grammatical form of the preterit			‘past action’

former derivational formant *-l* has been transferred to an abstract grammatical morpheme—the preterit marker (cf. Andersen 1987: 26; Ivanov 1983: 351). That is why, alongside other grammarians (Pauliny 1947: 61; Ružička 1966: 474; also Andersen 1987: 26), I prefer to refer to this item as the *l*-form.

Accordingly, the present forms of *BE* lost the syntactic and morphological characteristics of the copula and of the auxiliary, losing the ability to express temporal and aspectual relations (preserved, for instance, in constructions with *-n/-t* participles—cf. 2.), and acquiring the status of a free grammatical morpheme (cf. Ružička 1966: 472ff), also called the grammatical auxiliary (Karlík 2017) or the person and number marker (Andersen 1987).

For the following analysis, it is necessary to add that in the West Slavic languages the present tense forms of *BE* in all semantic and functional statuses (including the full verb, copula, and auxiliary) underwent a reduction of phonological substance from being disyllabic to monosyllabic, which is essential for their following development in the analytical preterit form, because being monosyllabic they lost stress and became sentence enclitics.⁵

2. The Divergent Development of the Analytical Preterit in Slavic Languages

The Proto-Slavic construction of the perfect, consisting of the *l*-form of the verb and the present form of *BE* in the function of the person marker, was the

⁵ In Slovak and Czech phonological theory, the term *enclitic* also includes free grammatical morphemes—*BE*-forms—in analytical verb constructions (Mistrík 1993: 347); it is defined as an auxiliary clitic in *Nový encyklopedický slovník češtiny*—cf. Uhlířová 2017.

basis for today's forms of the general preterit, which exist in Slavic languages in three structurally different types of analytical constructions and one synthetic type⁶:

TYPE I: the *l*-form and the present form of *BE* in the whole paradigm (e.g., Croatian *išao sam, išao si, išao je, ...*⁷) in the majority of South Slavic languages and in Sorbian;

TYPE II: similar to Type I, in which the verb *be* dropped out in the 3rd pers. sg. and pl. (e.g., Slovak *chodil som, chodil si, chodil Ø, ...*) in Slovak and Czech;

TYPE III: a synthetic form where the grammatical suffixes in the 1st and 2nd person sg. and pl. originate in the former *BE* forms (*chodziłem, chodziliście, chodził-ø, ...*) in Polish.

TYPE IV: a personal pronoun and the *l*-form (e.g., Russian *ja chodil, ty chodil, on chodil, ...*) in the Eastern Slavic languages⁸.

The difference seemingly lies only in the absence (IV), presence (I) and partial presence (II, III) of *BE* forms (or their reduced forms), while the *l*-forms remain unaffected. However, in my analysis from the point of view of grammaticalization, divergent results arise from the gradual loss of autonomy of both elements in the former verbal-nominal construction and from the different degree of the aforementioned covert semantic and functional changes: decategorization and desemanticization. In the case of *l*-forms, the degree is reflected in the gradual loss of the adjectival characteristics of participles and their integration into the verbal tense paradigm, and in the case of *BE* forms it is a decline from the status of a copula to that of a grammatical morpheme, which led to phonological erosion, cliticization, and even loss.

Table 2 shows that in Slovak preterit constructions (also true for Czech) the *l*-forms pattern more like verbs (cf. the forms of the present tense) and diverge from other types of participles (cf. the forms of passive construction

⁶ I am aware of the fact that this typology is generalized and simplified to a high extent, as it is limited to standard languages. As I will show, using examples from Slovak dialects, the situation in dialects is much more varied both from the point of view of grammatical structure of the form and that of the coexistence of several types inside the dialect norm manifested as variation. I apply this typology as a simplified starting point for further interpretation.

⁷ 'I went, you went, he went'—the same in Types II, III, and IV.

⁸ With respect to the obligatory presence of the formal expressing of the subject by a personal pronoun, which functions here as a grammatical person marker, and the difference to synthetic forms in Polish, I consider this form a type of analytical form despite some authors indicating it is synthetic (Borkovskij and Kuznecov 1963: 283; Dickey 2013: 78).

Table 2. Selected Syntactic Structures of the Slovak Preterit in Comparison with the Present and the Passive

	indicative	negation	question	short answer
present	<i>Pozývame...</i> [We invite...]	<i>Nepozývame ...</i> [We don't invite...]	<i>Pozývate ...?</i> [Do you invite...?]	<i>Pozývame. /Nepozývame.</i> [We do.//We don't.]
preterit	<i>Pozvali sme...</i> [We invited...]	<i>Nepozvali sme ...</i> [We didn't invite...]	<i>Pozvali ste ...?</i> [Did you invite...?]	<i>Pozvali. // Nepozvali.</i> [We did.//We didn't.]
	* <i>Sme pozvali...</i>	* <i>Nie sme pozvali...</i>	* <i>Ste pozvali ...?</i>	* <i>Sme. // *Nie sme.</i>
passive	<i>Sme pozvaní.</i> [We are invited.]	<i>Nie sme pozvaní.</i> [We are not invited.]	<i>Ste pozvaní?</i> [Are you invited?]	<i>Sme. // Nie sme.</i> [We are.//We are not.]

with *n*-participles). In connection with *BE* forms, the latter behave differently: 1) in (stylistically neutral) syntactic phrases in the indicative with the initial position of the verb in the main clause, 2) in negation and questions with the initial position of the verb in the main clause, and 3) in simple answers. This divergence is connected to the decline of *BE* forms to a free grammatical morpheme with the *l*-forms (corresponding with the grammatical morpheme in the present forms).

The constructions marked with an asterisk, which are impossible in Slovak or Czech, are typical (except the difference in the mono and disyllabic structure of the *BE* forms) for the South Slavic languages and Sorbian⁹, which supports my hypothesis that the status of *BE* forms in these languages primarily has more a character of a copula and that *l*-forms have preserved more of the status of participle, so the preterit construction as a whole got a lower degree of desemanticization and decategorization in the course of the grammaticalization process than in Slovak, Czech, and Polish (Múcková 2016: 143; cf. also Tseng 2009). This also implies that both desemanticization and decategorization are “continuous” processes (cf. Norde 2012: 83). The higher degree of desemanticization in the West Slavic languages is one of the factors

⁹ Compare, for instance, Serbian and Croatian *Nisam pisao* (‘I did not write’); Bulgarian *Ne sâm go videl* (‘I did not see him’); Sorbian *Njesym džětał* (‘I did not do’); Serbian and Croatian *Jesi li čitao ovu knjigu?*—*Jesam* (‘Did you read that book?—Yes, I did’); Slovene *Ste videli novo predstavo?*—*Sem* (‘Did you see the new performance?—Yes, I did’), and so on (according to Běličová 1998: 84; cf. also Damborský 1967: 12).

which enabled the loss of *BE* forms in the third person singular and plural,¹⁰ as well as the further development into the synthetization of the analytic form known in Polish.¹¹

The evolution of Polish synthetic forms (the beginning of which goes back to the 14th century—cf. Kowalska 1976: 22ff; Długosz-Kurczabowa and Dubisz 2015: 307ff; Kopečný et al. 1980: 104; Andersen 1987: 24) represents the highest degree of grammaticalization within the West Slavic languages as it corresponds with the well-known claim that the evolution and development of grammatical markers is paralleled (usually in the process of affixation) by the gradual reduction and final loss of phonological substance (cf. Schiering 2010: 74) alongside the fact that phonetic reduction (in Lehmann's terminology a "decrease in structural scope"; Lehmann 2015: 152ff) is conceived as one of the important parameters of grammaticalization.¹²

This process of synthetization in Polish—the development of *BE* forms from free morphemes through enclitics to grammatical affixes ("desinences")—has been described in Andersen (1987). In his detailed description based on historical texts from the 16th to 20th centuries and the older work of Rittel (1975), he mainly concentrates on the cliticization of the auxiliary and

¹⁰ This is also preserved in the South Slavic languages. For other formal, semantic, and pragmatic factors of the *BE*-dropping in the 3rd person cf. Múcsková (2016: 57–75 with additional sources concerning this question); for its cognitive and functional aspects cf. Dickey (2013).

¹¹ If we take into account the already mentioned reduction of phonological substance of *BE* forms from disyllabic to monosyllabic items, the change from free grammatical morphemes (or free enclitics) to bound suffixes in Polish is accompanied by a new degree of phonological reduction. However, this does not prevent us from perceiving it as a part of one grammaticalization chain. The change from a free grammatical morpheme to an inflectional marker in a grammaticalization chain is sometimes used as an example of secondary grammaticalization (Norde 2012: 78), but this is only one possible notion (for discussion, see Breban 2014).

¹² The example of variant analytical results of the preterit construction in Slavic languages is a contribution to those case studies presenting the progressiveness of grammaticalization in individual languages, which demonstrate that "phonological erosion does not necessarily accompany morphosyntactic and functional processes of grammaticalization" (Schiering 2010: 74—the author also gives here the example of passive constructions in Northern Slavic languages and Baltic languages described in Wiemer 2004). Or, in other words: "[L]inguistic expression can be grammaticalized without undergoing significant phonetic attrition" (Mengden and Simon 2014: 350). I am inclined to the view of Giger (2006: 369), who states that in the continuous and long grammaticalization process we must assume some "transient areas". This is valid not only in the case of a shift from free syntagms to analytical verbal forms but also in all cases of application of the grammaticalization parameters, which is evident in descriptions of individual cases, where the full set of parameters of grammaticalization is seldom systematically applied (cf. Norde 2012: 76).

on the course of change of its syntactic position from the P2 position (according to Wackernagel's rule) to its agglutination to *l*-forms with some exceptions ("tmesis"—i.e., the separation of person and number markers from the *l*-form) more common in written language, formal style, and the speech of older speakers and regionally in the south: "We cannot claim that this development [from clause-second position to *l*-form desinence—GM] has run its course. Even limiting ourselves to standard Polish, we must acknowledge that the person and number markers remain free to occur in tmesis in the preterit and predominantly do so in the conditional. But the development as a whole is so far long, and presents so many indications of morphological and phonological univerbation, that its end point is, if not clear in sight, at least plain to see" (Andersen 1987: 41). Motyl (2014), following on from the work of Kowalska (1976), presented another detailed analysis of the development from the movable suffixation of the free morpheme to the preceding word keeping the enclitic position (she defines these constructions as "analytical") to the agglutination to the *l*-forms ("synthetic" form), which is also based on historical texts from the 16th to the 18th centuries.

These studies demonstrate the gradualness of this development in the increasing frequency of the *l*-forms with attached person and number markers as well as in the productivity of both forms in syntactic and paradigmatic relationships: the enclitic position was retained longer in subordinate clauses than in main clauses, in clauses starting with the conjunctions (*i)že* ('that'), *gdy* ('when'), *bo* ('because'), and the pronouns *który* ('which'), and *co* ('what') as well as in connection with modal verbs, other pronouns, and so on. The synthetic forms were more frequent in singular forms than in the plural and in the 1st person than in the 2nd person. There were also differences in the types of texts and literary genres as well as in some regions (for details and other sources, cf. Motyl 2014: 181–225; Kowalska 1976: 42ff; Andersen 1987: 29–34). The variation declines in the 18th century, and from the second half of the 18th century the situation corresponds with the state in contemporary Polish to a high degree.

The study of grammaticalization as a gradual process involving a complex of interrelated changes requires a tracing of the gradualness of structural and functional changes, i.e., tracing their application on individual items in language usage. The aforementioned analyses by Andersen (1987) and Motyl (2014) were based on historical texts and studied the process diachronically.

Due to historical circumstances, there are no Slovak texts documenting earlier stages of Slovak language development.¹³ On the other hand, Slovak, as a language with a young literary and official standard variety, has preserved

¹³ As a written language, Slovak began to emerge during the 15th century. It is very variable as, in addition to the rich regional differentiation of the territory belonging to the Hungarian Kingdom, it was to a large extent influenced by Czech, which is a

a rich differentiation of dialects retaining archaic or marginal features. This historical context and its consequences on the preservation of regional dialect variation present an opportunity to utilize dialect data for diachronic language research.

However, utilizing dialect material is not only a kind of “making a virtue of necessity.” A benefit of the dialect approach to investigation is that, unlike the language of historical administrative or legal documents that may follow some kind of standardized language norm (or even unlike standard languages themselves), dialect recordings reflect real spoken language, i.e., spontaneous synchronic variation as an intermediate stage of gradual diachronic language change, as well as the role of language and dialect contacts in its horizontal progress. The synchronic variation inside one regional dialect may shed light on the reconstruction of historical stages of the language change process in another (particularly closely related) dialect. The importance of considering dialect differentiation and variation for revealing historical forms of language is also emphasized by Greenberg (2009).

In the following section, I briefly describe three concrete (and today quite marginal) types of preterit in Slovak dialects with a cliticized person marker (two of them directly related to Polish), which co-exist with Type II and IV analytical forms. An analysis of the occurrence of these forms in the northern Slovak dialects reveals, at least to some extent, the gradualness of the development of a free morpheme to a bound grammatical suffix. The suffixes in all identified types are not agglutinated to *l*-forms, but they are movable and usually take the second-clause (Wackernagel P2) position, thus resembling the older state in Polish; therefore, we can hardly call these forms “synthetic”, but on the other hand, undergoing some degree of phonological reduction and the loss of the free morpheme status, it is necessary to distinguish them from analytical constructions. That is why I prefer to call them “synthetized” forms.

3. Synthetized Preterit Forms in Slovak Dialects

In addition to the prevailing analytical preterit construction in the dominant part of Slovakia, there exist three types of synthetized preterit forms in geographically peripheral Slovak dialect areas (cf. the map in the appendix, based on Štolc 1981: 311).

closely related language, and to a lesser degree by Polish in texts from areas in the north.

3.1. The Synthetized Preterit with the Suffix *-m* in the 1st pers. sg.

This first type is represented by examples (4–6), which come from the eastern Slovak village of Úbrež (4)¹⁴ and the northeastern Slovak village of Hertník (5–6)¹⁵:

- (4) Prišla-**m** do xiži.
 Come_{L-FORM.FEM}-**be**_{1SG} into room_{GEN.SG}
 ‘I came into the room.’

- (5) Peř roki-**m** služila.
 Five year_{ACC.PL}-**be**_{1SG} serve_{L-FORM.FEM}
 ‘I served for five years.’

- (6) Doma-**m** ňemohla bic.
 At home-**be**_{1SG} can_{L-FORM.FEM.NEG} be_{INF}
 ‘I was not able to be at home.’

This type of synthetized forms with the suffix *-m* originating in the dialectal *jem* (‘be’ in the 1sg) is known from the northeastern part of Slovakia bordering on Poland and Ukraine. Paradigmatically it is limited to the 1sg (i.e., other forms preserve an analytical character). Older sources and descriptive works (Štolc 1978: 177; Buffa 1995: 157–58) also register some very rare evidence of 2sg forms with the suffix *-ś* (from *śi* = ‘be’ 2sg) (*bule-ś*, *bula-ś* = ‘you were’). The ending *-m* is movable, i.e., it is not bound to the *l*-forms (cf. (5) and (6)) and usually keeps its position according to Wackernagel’s rule. The situation in this region is interesting because of the parallel coexistence of this form with two other analytical types—Type II (*robila som*), prevailing in other Slovak dialects, and Type IV (*ja robila*), a form known from east Slavic dialects. As will be commented below (Section 4), both analytical forms are much more frequent than the synthetized forms. The variation of forms may be to some extent motivated by territorial position and the influence of Polish (in the case of the synthetized type) and east Slavic dialects (in the case of types with obligatory personal pronoun). However, their emergence is not necessarily a consequence of dialect contacts, as they represent a higher phase of gram-

¹⁴ From the archive of dialect recordings at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

¹⁵ From the card file archive of dialect texts at the Ľudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia.

matalization and their later productivity has been influenced by external language planning factors.

3.2. The Synthetized Preterit with the Suffix *-ch* (in Texts Transcribed as *x*) in the 1st pers. sg.

This type is represented by examples (7–9), which come from the western Slovak village of Myjava¹⁶:

- (7) Prišla-**x** tam ráno.
 Come_{L-FORM.FEM}-**be**_{1SG} there in the morning
 'I came there in the morning.'
- (8) Jeden den-**x** prišla, druhí-**x** odešla.
 One day_{ACC.SG}-**be**_{1SG} come_{L-FORM.FEM} other-**be**_{1SG} leave_{L-FORM.FEM}
 'One day I came, on the other day I left.'
- (9) Dobre-**x** to urobel.
 Well-**be**_{1SG} it_{ACC.SG} do_{L-FORM.MASC}
 'I did it well.'

The forms with the suffix *-ch* are very archaic. Data from historical dialectological field works show that they were registered in several northern villages in the central (and some in the west) Slovak region (Vážný 1926: 332–336; Štolc 1978: 177). They can be still heard in transitional Slovak-Polish dialects.¹⁷ The southern Polish region is considered to be the source of this innovation,¹⁸ and from this center it spread southward into some northern Slovak villages by economic migration (Wallachian colonization) as well as other factors. A typical example of the spread of language innovation far from its center due to migration is the group of villages in the southwestern region of Slovakia (the

¹⁶ Cited according to Vážný 1926: 332–36.

¹⁷ The so-called Goral dialects are spoken along the Slovak and Polish border in both Slovakia and Poland. An analysis of these dialects deserves special attention in a separate article.

¹⁸ In the 1SG (with suffixes *-ech*, *-ch*), 1PL (*-chmy*) and 1DU (*-chwa*)—cf. Klemensiewicz, Lehr-Spławiński, and Urbańczyk 1955: 372–73; Długosz-Kurczabowa and Dubisz 2015: 308; Vážný 1926: 336. The forms are also sporadically documented in old Polish texts from the 15th and 16th centuries from southern Poland but gradually disappeared in the second half of the 16th century (Kowalska 1976: 25ff; Motyl 2014: 201).

Myjava region¹⁹) where the occurrence of this *-ch* forms is surprisingly more compact and historically most preserved in spite of it being absolutely a “foreign” element in the surrounding southwestern Slovak dialect and with many other dialect characteristics originating in the northern area having been assimilated. These synthetized preterit forms with *-ch* have been preserved even in the Slovak dialects of three villages in Hungary, which after the expulsion of the Turks were settled by immigrants from the southwestern Slovak region (Žiláková 1986: 7). The fact that these forms have been mainly preserved in new areas distant from the source of the change can be explained by the salience of these forms as a kind of identity marker.²⁰

As in the previous type, these synthetized preterit forms with *-ch* also co-exist with analytical forms (Type II), and their paradigmatic scope is limited to the 1sg; they are less frequent in the masculine form (9). The suffix *-ch*, as it is evident in (8) and (9), is syntactically movable; they are cliticized in correspondence with Wackernagel’s rule.

The origin of the *-ch* is interrelated with the historical aorist, but it is not its direct descendent. Its evolution is motivated by a conditional (in Proto-Slavic plusperfect) construction consisting of the *l*-form and *bych* (the aorist of *BE* 1sg, which is in fact the only real relic of the historical aorist in Slovak dialects), where *bych* underwent a reanalysis; due to the coexistence of the older conditional forms *bol bych* [*be’_{L-FORM.MASC}* + *’be’_{CONDIT.1SG}*—‘I would be’] (common in Czech and still preserved in western Slovak dialects) and later constructions *bol by som* [*be’_{L-FORM.MASC}* + *’would’_{CONDIT}* + *’be’_{1SG}*—‘I would be’] (expanded from the central region), the formant *by* started to be perceived as a conditional grammatical marker and the suffix *-ch* was analogically identified with the free grammatical morpheme *som* (*’be’_{1SG}*) as a person marker (Vážný 1926: 329).²¹

¹⁹ People from the northern regions settled here in the 16th and 17th centuries (Varsik 1972: 151–52). The dialect of this region is very heterogeneous in its phonological and grammatical systems and is supposed to be a “unity of substratum and adstratum dialect phenomena” (Krajčovič 1988: 221).

²⁰ Stanislav documented this form as an identity marker in the case of the village of Východná in the northeastern part of central Slovakia, when the surrounding villages called its inhabitants “*jachári*”—i.e., people using *jach* instead of *ja som*—‘I am’ (Stanislav 1967: 435), i.e., the close coexistence of both forms in neighbouring villages led people to identification of *-ch* with the free grammatical morpheme *som* (see also footnote 21).

²¹ The identification of *-ch* with *som* is also documented by quite rare examples from the Myjava dialects, where the suffix *-ch* also occurs in present verbal-nominal constructions, e.g., *jách zdravý* (‘I am healthy’; in Standard Slovak *ja som zdravý*), i.e., the suffix *-ch* is identified with *som* in the function of copula.

3.3. The Synthetized Preterit with the Suffix *-s* in the 2nd pers. sg.

The last type is represented by examples (10–12), which come from the western Slovak villages of Malé Leváre (10)²², Kuchyňa (11)²³, and Lozorno (12)²⁴:

- (10) Dostaťa-s vouaco?
 Get_{L-FORM.FEM}-**be**_{2SG} something
 ‘Did you get anything?’
- (11) Co-s vizeu?
 What-**be**_{2SG} see_{L-FORM.MASC}
 ‘What did you see?’
- (12) Krutá-s biua, tak odešeu.
 Cruel-**be**_{2SG} be_{L-FORM.FEM} so leave_{L-FORM.MASC.3SG}
 ‘You were cruel, so he left.’

The type of synthetized form with the suffix *-s* (from *si*—‘be’ in the 2sg) known from the southwestern Slovak dialects is, unlike the first two cases, very common and more frequent than its analytical counterpart. It is limited to the forms of the 2sg and coexists with analytical forms in other members of the paradigm. The center of this cliticization change was in the Moravian and eastern Czech dialect area, where it is still productive and paradigmatically generalized (Lamprecht, Šlosar, and Bauer 1986: 244; Balhar 2002: 594; Bělič 1972: 198). From this center, the change spread to the southwestern Slovak region. The suffix *-s* systematically preserves its enclitic character and occurs with the first stressed item of the phrase.

In the following sections, I mainly concentrate on variants of the synthetized forms given in subsection 3.1 and partially in 3.2. Both are related to the process of synthetization known from Polish. They are becoming less frequent in occurrence and are perceived to be older and archaic, associated with the speech of older people. They are replaced by analytical forms (found in the majority of present-day Slovak dialects as well as in Standard Slovak), which are, in fact, historically older.

²² From the card file archive of dialect texts at the Ludovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia.

²³ From the card file archive of dialect texts at the Ludovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia.

²⁴ From the archive of dialect recordings at the Faculty of Arts of the Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

4. Support of Dialectology in Revealing the Course of Language Change

In these two concluding sections, I present remarks focused on the possible interrelation of state and evolution in the dialects on one hand and the diachronic progress of language change involving mutually related and subsequent processes on the other. Except for dialect differentiation and internal variation, which are obviously accepted as a source for historical linguistic investigations, observations in current tendencies in dialect development can contradict some commonly accepted opinions about language development.

4.1. Dialect Variation

The most common concomitant of every language change is an intermediate state of synchronic variation existing in social and regional language usage (of course, without speakers being necessarily aware of it) following from the coexistence of different structural items, which are nearly equal in terms of function but only partially overlapping from the point of view of language change gradualness. Focusing on preterit forms in particular Slovak dialects, we can identify several types of variation. The following example offers a picture of alternation of three structural variants of preterit—two analytical types (Type II [*robila jem*] and Type IV [*ja robila*]—‘I did’) and the type of the synthetized form (Type III [*robilam*])—in the speech of one person:

- (13) No ta **ja še** kravox **napašla (IV)** doisc. **Služilam (III)** pež roki a dvacec korun **jem** na rok **mala (II)**. Pež rokim **služila (III)**, dvacec korun **lem jem** na rok **mala (II)**, **šizem** statki **mušelam (III)** pašc. No a **robila jem (II)** šicko, take žifče male, ošem roki. I **varila už jem (II)** i xorix tam **poxožila**, i kravi **pasla** i **dojila** i **mucila**, za dvacec korun. No, dvacec korun na rok a pež rokim **služila (III)** u jedneho gazdi. Aňi mi ňemohl’i u ňeho ňixto služic, taki ňedobri gazda bul. No ale ta **ja vislužila (IV)**, bo domam **ňemohla (III)** bic, bo naz bulo šizmero žeci. Ocež umar, mňe ňebulo lem tri roki, no ta **mušelam (III)**. **Mušelam (III)** služic, ked **jem xcela (II)** xľeba jišc, **mušelam (III)** pušc meži luži. Ta **stanulam (III)**, **napaslam (III)** kravi, rano **stanulam (III)**, **pošlam (III)** s kravami. S kravami **přišla**, **lapila mucic**, **zmucila jem (II)**, platno mačac na jarek...²⁵

‘I pastured cows so much. I served for five years and I had twenty crowns a year. Five years I served, only twenty crowns a year I had,

²⁵ This 1967 text comes from the village of Hertník from the northeastern Slovak dialect area. It is deposited in the card file archive of dialect texts at the Eudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia.

seven cows I had to pasture. And I did everything, such a small girl, eight years. I also cooked, I took care of sick people, I pastured cows, milked cows, churned butter, for twenty crowns. Twenty crowns a year and five years I served one farmer. Nobody could serve him; he was such a bad farmer. But I had to serve, because I could not be at home, because we were seven children. Father had died, I wasn't but three years old, and so I had to. I had to serve, if I wanted to eat bread, I had to go among people. So, I got up, pastured cows, in the morning I got up, I went with the cows. I came back with the cows, started to churn, I churned, and I went to soak the canvas in the stream...'

In addition to structural variation, there is also a paradigmatic variation based on the category of person (synthetized forms occur mostly in one or a limited number of members of the paradigm) and partially also on the category of gender (with the slight prevalence of feminine forms), which in the case of the preterit is a relic of the nominal grammatical category reflected in *l*-forms (former participles).

The aforementioned commentaries about the minority or marginal occurrence of synthetized forms are confirmed by a statistic showing that the synthetized forms represented only 15% of all preterit forms in the 1sg identified in the analyzed corpus of texts from three villages (Dlhá Lúka and Hertník situated in the northern part of the East Slovakia and Úbrež in the East near the Slovak-Ukrainian border²⁶) belonging to the area characterized by coexistence of two analytical forms and the synthetized form with the suffix *-m*. It is necessary to add that the synthetized forms were identified mainly in paratactic constructions with a slight prevalence for the second or further position. In hypotactic constructions, they are more frequent in subordinate clauses where the suffixes are often cliticized to conjunctions. From 71 identified examples of synthetized forms, only in eight cases did the position of the suffix depart from the usual Wackernagel P2 position of the enclitic and shifted to the *l*-form, but this might be motivated by phonetic dissimilation or expressiveness of the utterance (cf. underlined forms in the text).

Synthetized forms with the suffix *-ch* are even more archaic and very rare (8% of all 1sg preterit forms in the corpus of three villages in Slovak enclaves—Východná in the northern part of Central Slovakia and Turá Lúka and Myjava

²⁶ The analysed texts from Dlhá Lúka and Úbrež come from the Archive of dialect recordings at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava. The text from Hertník comes from the card file archive of dialect texts at the Ludovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia.

situated in the West, in the Myjava region²⁷) and their usage is rather individual (of fifteen informants from the village of Východná in the central northern region, only one used the synthetized forms). However, an analysis of these enclaves would be misleading without a detailed exploration of Goral dialects (cf. fn 17); therefore, it will be the subject of a separate study.

These observations concerning the syntactic and paradigmatic functioning and the coexistence with analytical forms comport with Andersen's results and the state in Polish before the change from the enclitic to the grammatical suffix,²⁸ but there is a difference in the direction of the grammaticalization change. While in Polish the results follow the gradual progress of the synthetization phase in the grammaticalization chain, in Slovak dialects the contemporary evolution is reversed. In the phase of initial synthetization further development went back to analytical forms, which was motivated by the prestige of the standard language with its codified analytic type of the preterit. But the identified tendencies in the language variation show that there are apparent similarities between the beginning phase of the emergence of synthetized forms (like in historical Polish) and the gradual course of their (externally motivated) archaization (like in the northeastern Slovak dialects). Therefore, it is possible to say that (at least in this case) the process of extension of the innovation and the process of archaization have a mirroring character.

This partial reverse development does not contradict the unidirectionality of the grammaticalization process; in my opinion, it cannot be assumed to be a debonding type of degrammaticalization. According to Norde (2012: 86ff), "(d)ebonding is a composite change whereby a bound morpheme in a specific linguistic context becomes a free morpheme," but the process of archaization and the loss of synthetized forms in Slovak dialects is realized at the very beginning of the synthetization phase, and the extent of synthetization here cannot be identified with the state characterized by a structurally attested "bound morpheme". Moreover, the situation is characterized by considerable variability, and development is affected by language planning factors.

²⁷ The texts of all three villages are from the card file archive of dialect texts at the Eudovít Štúr Institute of Linguistics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, Slovakia.

²⁸ In my opinion, the tendencies of cliticization and the following phonological erosion in Polish and the eastern Slovak dialects examined here are also supported by the absence of phonological length and the character of phonetic stress in the penultima position. The interrelationship between erosion as a phonological effect of cliticization, a stronger phonetic stress in languages, and rhythm-based language typology has been presented by Schiering (2010: 74; 85ff): "The major prediction of this typology is that stress-based languages, which are characterized by high degrees of segmental effect of stress, show significantly higher degrees of erosion in grammaticalization."

4.2. Contradiction of Some Consensus Opinions

The reverse development from synthetized forms to analytical ones does not relativize the unidirectionality of grammaticalization. However, it does contradict the frequent and commonly accepted claim that peripheral phenomena and items undergoing archaization are older and represent an earlier stage of language development. An interesting fact connected with the archaization of the synthetized forms with the suffixes *-ch* and *-m* is that they are historically younger than analytic forms, but today they are assumed to be older, archaic, and connected with the speech of the older generation.

Another commonly accepted opinion is that marginal and specific phenomena undergo leveling under the pressure of the prestigious standard language and convergent interdialects, which is documented by many examples in sociolinguistic studies of present-day regional dialect development, in which marginal and specific features of dialect undergo assimilation and are replaced by more general and more widely spread structural items. The fact that synthetized forms with the *-ch* suffix were more resistant in a foreign surrounding (after migration) represents a case where the differing phenomenon became salient and connected with a minority identity (after migration into a different dialect environment); it functions as a kind of sub-ethnic identity marker (cf. 3.2).

5. Conclusion

As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the point of departure for this investigation of the grammatical evolution of the preterit is grammaticalization theory, which concentrates on the course of the change more than on its final result. This focus creates room for studying historical language change as a gradual and continuous process and for including dialectological data into historical linguistic research. Thus, the dialectological description of the state in northern and eastern Slovak dialects, characterized by the coexistence of structurally different preterit types as well as by the occurrence of synthetized forms, can contribute to the historical study of the development from the analytical to synthetic grammatical form of preterit: the gradual change from the Slovak and Czech type of preterit to the Polish type. But this also goes the other way; the reconstruction of the course of historical change opens possibilities to understand the current dynamism and development of the language we use today and to see the relativeness of the delimited dichotomy of diachronic and synchronic linguistics.

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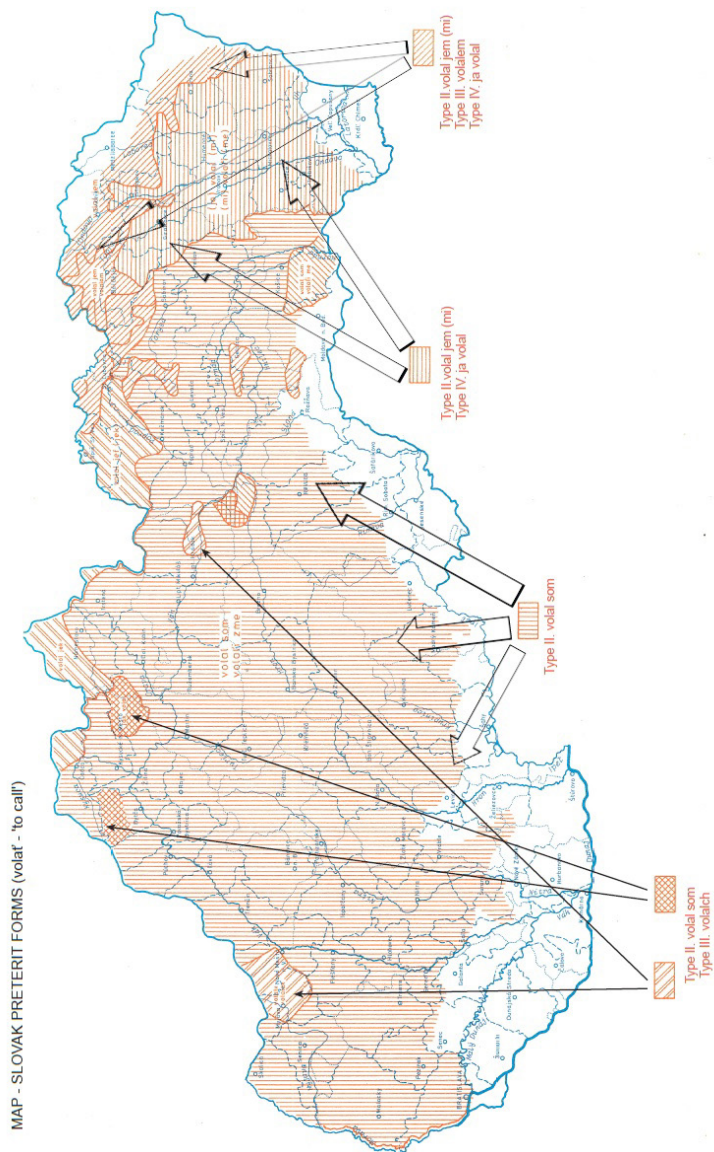
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Comenius University & Slovak Academy of Sciences
mucskova.gabriela@gmail.com



Based on a map published in Štolc 1981: 311.