

Towards a Typology of Participial Development: Evidence from Romance and Slavic

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1 Introduction

1.1 General introduction

The evolution of participles into finite verbs is a cross-linguistically common change. However, this evolution has generally been treated in a highly individualized manner, in which changes in a given language or language family are discussed without reference to corresponding developments in other language families or sub-families. Given this, a typology of participial development is desirable, in order to more accurately classify and place various phenomena, and to facilitate the cross-linguistic comparison of diachronic data.

Therefore, in an attempt to sketch an outline of a possible typology, evidence will be examined from Romance and Slavic, and a typology will be proposed consisting of the following five stages: (1) a stage in which participles have a purely participial meaning, (2) a stage in which participial meaning coexists with use as a semantically bleached past tense marker with an auxiliary, (3) a stage in which participles are primarily used as temporally null but still non-finite past tense markers, although adjectival meaning may remain on a lexical level, (4) a stage where participles have begun to evolve into finite verb forms, simultaneously preserving some non-finite functions, and (5) a stage where participles have completely evolved into finite verb forms, although, again, there may be lexicalized remnants of former states still present in the language.

However, before an examination of the relevant evidence from Romance and Slavic, it is necessary to give a brief overview of the participial constructions under consideration.

1.2 Participles in Romance and Slavic: the starting points

Four principal participial developments will be considered in this paper: first, the Romance past participle derived from the Latin passive perfect participle, second, the Slavic past active participle, third, the Slavic resultative participle (also known as the I-participle), and fourth, the Slavic past passive participle.

The Romance past participle is descended from the Latin passive perfect participle, e.g. *actus*, *-a*, *-um* from Lat. *agō* “lead.” In Romance, this participle was used to form a periphrastic perfect with the auxiliary HAVE, as well as a variety of periphrastic tense forms. The Slavic participles, however, required a somewhat more detailed description. Although a full description of the morphology of these participial forms is outside the scope of this paper, a brief characterization of their form and function is necessary to situate their subsequent historical developments. The past active participle in Old Church Slavonic had the formant *-ŭ(š)-* or *-vŭ(š)-* plus adjectival endings, e.g. *slyšati* “to hear” > *slyšavŭ* (MNSg), *slyšavŭši* (FNSg).¹ With regard to the diachronic morphological development of these participles, it should be noted that the formant *-vŭ(š)-* was generalized and that, as the result of regular sound change, /ŭ/ > Ø in this environment. In Old Church Slavonic, these participles express temporal subordination to the finite verb in the clause (Lunt 2001: 158). The Slavic resultative participle was formed from the infinitive stem, with a characteristic /l/ formant, to which adjectival endings were added, e.g. *slyšati* “to hear” > *slyšalŭ* (MNSg), *slyšala* (FNSg). In Old Church Slavonic, these participles were used with the auxiliary BE to form periphrastic perfect tenses. The Slavic past passive participle is formed with the suffixes *-t-*, *-n-*, *-en-* plus adjectival desinences. The distribution of these suffixes across conjugation classes is complex.

1.3 Criteria for analysis

The analysis of the development of these forms will focus primarily on the following criteria: first, agreement phenomena and second, syntactic use as finite verbs. The former criterion is of particular relevance for the development of the Romance past participle and the Slavic past passive participle, whereas the latter criterion will be used to assess the development of the Slavic past active participle and the Slavic resultative participle.

2 The proposed typology

2.1 Stage 1

¹ /š/ is deleted in the MNSg.

In stage 1, participles have strictly participial meaning. This stage corresponds directly to the descriptions given above – i.e., the “textbook” use of participles as such. However, constructions can occur in this stage that anticipate further developments. With regard to these constructions, a consideration both of semantics and formal behavior is necessary to determine the proper analysis of these forms.

An example of this is the incipient perfect found in Latin and in Polish. Latin forms such as (1) below have been cited as the origins of the subsequent Romance construction:

- (1) habeo litteras scriptas
have-PRES-1SG letter-ACC.PL write-PPP-ACC.PL
'I have the letters written.' (Posner 1996: 153)

Key to the analysis of such forms is the consideration of agreement patterns. It can be seen here that the participle *scriptas* agrees in number and case with *litteras*, which argues for a more conservative analysis, in which such constructions are considered to not have yet been grammaticalized into a perfect tense. This analysis is reflected in the above translation. Nonetheless, it is clear that the semantic difference between “I have the letters written” and “I have written the letters” is small enough to facilitate grammaticalization.

Almost identical examples have been documented in Polish, although these constructions have not yet been included in codified grammars:

- (2) Mam już wszystkie egzaminy pozdawane
have-PRES-1SG already all-M.ACC.PL exam-ACC.PL take-PPP-M.ACC.PL
'I've already taken all of the exams.' (Rothstein 1993: 715)
- (3) Wojtek ma złamaną nogę.
Wojtek-NOM.SG have-PRES-3SG break-PPP-F.ACC.SG leg-ACC.SG
'Wojtek has a broken leg' OR 'Wojtek has broken his leg.' (Lempp 1986: 126)
- (4) Mam zgubione banknoty. (ibid., op. cit.)
have-PRES-1SG lose-PPP-M.ACC.PL banknote-ACC.PL
'I have the lost banknotes' OR 'I have lost the banknotes.'

In all of these three examples, the participle displays full agreement in number, gender, and case. The construction has not been grammaticalized, leading to “multiple readings” such as those shown in the translations of (3) and (4) (Clancy 2006: 194). A multiple reading is also possible for (2), although a

non-perfect reading would be felicitous in a much more restricted set of circumstances. Agreement phenomena are critical in establishing the fact that this construction has not been grammaticalized.

2.2 Stage 2

In stage 2, participial meaning coexists with use as a semantically bleached past tense marker with an auxiliary. This is the best description of modern Romance languages such as Italian, French, and Spanish. In these languages the use of forms derived from the Latin past passive participle as participles can be contrasted to their use in periphrastic tense forms. A nearly identical phenomenon may also be found in Macedonian, in which the Slavic past passive participle has been incorporated into a periphrastic perfect tense.

In Italian constructions with a finite form of *avere* “to have” and the past participle, the past participle form does not show any agreement for gender and number, as is reflected in the following examples (Maiden 2000: 260-261):

- (5) Il vino aveva rovinato la sua vita
the wine-MASC have-IMPF-3SG ruin-PPP-MASC.SG the his life-FEM
'Wine had destroyed his life.' (Maiden 2000: 261)
- (6) Hanno visto Mario a Parigi
have-PRES-3PL see-PPP-MASC.SG Mario in Paris
'They saw Mario in Paris.' (Maiden 2000: 261)

This invariant past participle form is used periphrastically to form the following tenses: perfective infinitive, perfective gerund, past indicative, past subjunctive, pluperfect indicative, past anterior, pluperfect subjunctive, future perfect (Maiden 2000: 260-261). Given this, it may be said that the past participle is semantically bleached in these constructions insofar as it does not necessarily contain a past reference.

However, the Italian past participle does display agreement when used outside the context of the abovementioned periphrastic verb tense, as can be seen in the following examples:

- (7) Anche quest'anno in Italia sono state vendute
also this year in Italy be-PRES-3PL be-PPP-FEM.PL sell-PPP-FEM.PL
più bottiglie di champagne che di spumante italiano
more bottle-FEM.PL of champagne than of spumante Italian
'Also, in Italy more bottles of champagne than of Italian spumante were sold this year.' (Maiden 2000: 279)

- (8) Quanto l'hai aspettata?
how-long her have-PRES-3SG wait-PPP-FEM.SG
'How long did you wait for her?' (Maiden 2000: 270)

With regard to the behavior displayed by Italian, it is necessary to distinguish between synchronic and diachronic approaches. A key point to the typology proposed here is that one grammatical form displays two different patterns of agreement. What does it mean, then, to say "one grammatical form"? From a synchronic point of view, it is entirely appropriate to question this analysis, and to instead propose that in modern Italian there are two separate forms that happen to be descended from the same original Latin participle. However, from a diachronic point of view, the situation is reversed; the origin of these forms is more important, and the question of the proper abstract synchronic analysis is somewhat secondary.

Similar behavior can be found in French. Below, (9) demonstrates the lack of participial agreement in periphrastic tense forms (L'Huillier 1999: 126):

- (9) elle a enfin trouvé la solution à son
she have-PRES-3SG finally find-PPP-MASC.SG the solution-FEM to her
problème.
problem-MASC
'She has finally found the solution to her problem.'

A further analysis of agreement behavior in French is complicated by the relationship between modern French orthography to the spoken language. However, although the vast majority of French past participles do not display agreement outside the bounds of orthography, examples such as *craindre* 'to fear' > *craint* (masculine singular), *crainte* (feminine singular) demonstrate that French nonetheless should be placed in stage 2. If, however, over the course of time these irregular participial forms were to be leveled out, French would be more properly analyzed as transitional between stages 2 and 3.

The only Slavic language that displays similar developments is Macedonian, in which there is a periphrastic perfect formed using HAVE as an auxiliary followed by the neuter form of the past passive participle. The striking similarity of this construction to the Romance perfect has led to the hypothesis that this, along with other morphosyntactic innovations in Macedonian, is due to Romance influence, specifically from Aromanian (Gołąb 1984: 9). Regardless of its origins, however, the pattern of agreement phenomena shown by the participle in this construction directly parallels that seen above with Italian.

- (10) Toj mi ja pokaža, no jas vek'e ja
 he me-DAT her-ACC show-AOR.3SG, but I-NOM already her-ACC
 imav videno.
 have-IMPF-1SG see-PPP-NOM.SG
 'He pointed her out to me, but I had already seen her.' (Friedman 1993: 271)

What is called the "verbal adjective" in Macedonian – diachronically speaking, the past passive participle – is formed identically (Friedman 1993: 277). Therefore, *dojde* "come-PRES-3SG" yields the past passive participle *dojden-Ø* (masculine singular). In this context, the verbal adjective displays agreement in number and gender, similar to the pattern observed in Italian.

2.3 Stage 3

In stage 3, participles are primarily used as temporally null but still non-finite past tense markers, although adjectival meaning may remain on a lexical level. The best example of this stage is the resultative participle in Slavic. The Old Church Slavonic present perfect tense is formed with the auxiliary BE and the resultative participle, which agrees with the subject in gender and number. The resultative participle was also used in forming a periphrastic pluperfect and optative, and as such is semantically bleached with regard to tense in a way similar to the examples discussed above. Nonetheless, the following discussion will focus predominantly on the present perfect. The present perfect is illustrated in example (11) below, followed by (12), which will be the subject of further discussion.

- (11) prišelŭ jestŭ vasilisikŭ.
 come-RP-MASC.SG be-PRES-3SG Basiliscus-MASC.NOM.SG
 'Basiliscus has come.' (Huntley 1993: 152)

- (12) ...[*agodŭ] izgnilŭ
 ... fruit-FEM.ACC.SG rot-RP-FEM.ACC.SG.
 '...(to make its fruit) rotten' (Lunt 2001: 110)

Example (12) is the only attestation of this usage in Old Church Slavonic, which complicates an analysis of this. Lunt describes this as innovative, presumably on the grounds that in subsequent Church Slavonic manuscripts, the construction is more frequently attested (Lunt 2001: 110). However, there exist nonetheless strong grounds to suspect that this usage is actually archaic. Old Church Slavonic may be characterized as a language reconstructed from certain manuscripts, and given Lunt's relatively conservative selection, he states that, if

the material were set up in the type and format of his grammar, it would comprise less than a thousand pages, of which variants would make up 350 pages (Lunt 2001: 7). The fact that most of these texts are translations from the Greek is also relevant, as the Greek original can be expected to have some influence on translation choices.² However, of more relevance is the Indo-European evidence; deverbal adjectives in *-lo are found in multiple Indo-European languages, although few languages other than Slavic grammaticalize these forms as participles (Meillet 1965: 263). Given this, it is more probable that examples such as (12) actually represent archaisms in Slavic.

The situation in contemporary Serbian is nearly identical, at least from the point of view of historical morphology, with the caveat that the present tense auxiliary BE can be facultatively omitted in the construction corresponding to the Old Church Slavonic present perfect.³ It should also be noted that this construction has evolved into a general past, as the aorist, imperfect, and pluperfect have become more and more literary in scope in most dialects (Browne 1993: 230). The periphrastic general past derived from the Common Slavic present perfect is illustrated in examples (13) and (14):

(13) Mi smo videli Mariju
 we-NOM be-PRES-1PL see-RP-MASC.PL Marija-ACC
 'We saw (have seen) Marija.' (Browne 1993: 330)

(14) Koga je Marija videla?
 who-ACC be-PRES-3SG Marija-NOM see-RP-FEM.SG
 'Who did Marija see?' (Browne: 349)

In addition this, there exist certain lexicalized adjectives that were formed from the resultative participle. However, this is no longer productive in Serbian.

An example illustrating this is the comparison of the masculine nominative singular definite adjective forms *truli* "rotten, putrid, corrupt" and *oronuli* "feeble, decrepit, weak, dilapidated." Both of these adjectives are derived, historically, from the resultative participle. There is a corresponding verb *oronuti*

² The question of the influence of Greek on the syntax of written early Slavic sources is complex, and well beyond the scope of this paper. See Matthews 1967: 141 – 144 for a sketch of some opinions about the influence of Greek syntax on early East Slavic translations. It has also been argued that the dative absolute construction in Slavic was a calque from the Greek genitive absolute (Matthews 1967: 134). Although Matthews's views represent an extreme end of the spectrum of scholarly opinion on this issue, his comments nonetheless illustrate the extent to which Greek influence is debated.

³ These and following generalizations are equally valid for Bosnian and Croatian, although the examples will most closely reflect the Serbian standard language.

“to become feeble, decrepit, weak, dilapidated,” but no verb **truti* in the modern standard language.

In both Serbian and Old Church Slavonic, then, it is possible to observe the non-finite use of the resultative participle coexisting with lexicalized relic forms used as adjectives.

2.4 Stage 4

Stage 4 of the proposed typology denotes a point at which participles have begun to evolve into finite verb forms while simultaneously preserving some non-finite functions. This stage has received the least attention from previous researchers and is the most complicated to characterize. However, evidence can be drawn from the Slavic languages that strongly supports the existence of this stage as distinct from stages 3 and 5.

According to the analysis proposed in Hristova 2002, past active participles in Early East Slavic, as represented by the Kievan Chronicle in particular, had evolved into finite verb forms. Below, (15) is an example of a string of participles that, according to Hristova, must be analyzed as finite.

- (15) i vda Vsevolodu Volodimirko za trudŭ
 and give-AOR-3SG Vsevolod-DAT Volodimirko-NOM for trouble-ACC
 1000 i 400 grivenŭ serebra peredi mnogo
 1,000 and 400 grivna-GEN.PL silver-GEN.SG, earlier much
 gl(agol)ivŭ a posleđi mnogo zaplativŭ
 speak-PAP-MASC.NOM.SG but later much pay-PAP-MASC.NOM.SG
 tĕmŭ beše i umolenŭ Vsevolodŭ
 this-INST.SG be-IMPF.3SG and calm-PPP-MASC.NOM.SG Vsevolod-NOM
 že cĕlovavŭ ego s bra(t)uju i
 EMPH kiss-PAP-MASC.NOM.SG he-ACC with brothers-INST and
 primirivŭ ego k sobĕ rekŭ
 reconcile-PAP.MASC.NOM.SG he-ACC to himself-DAT say-PAP-MASC.NOM.SG
 emu se cĕlŭ esi k tomu ne
 he-DAT REFL swear-RP-MASC.SG be-PRES-2SG to this-DAT not
 sŭgrĕšai.
 transgress-IMPV-2SG
 'And Vladimirko gave Vsevolod fourteen hundred grivnas of silver for his trouble; earlier [he] (Vladimirko) talked a lot and later paid a lot. By this [he] (Vsevolod) was moved to mercy. [Then] Vsevolod with his brothers kissed him, [he] reconciled with him [and] said to him "Lo, you have sworn to this. Do not transgress the oath".' (Hristova 2002: 150)

For the sake of clarity given the length of the excerpt, the participial forms analyzed by Hristova as finite are: *glagolivŭ* “talk,” *zaplativŭ* “pay,” *čelovavŭ* “kiss,” *primirivŭ* “reconcile,” and *rekŭ* “say.” As mentioned above in section 1.2, past active participles in early Slavic are generally analyzed as non-finite forms indicating temporal subordination to a matrix verb. Although it is impossible to treat the argument in full detail within the scope of this paper, arguments such as Hristova’s are based on demonstrating the impossibility of such an analysis in order to establish past active participles as finite verbs. However, the question remains of whether all participles should be analyzed as finite, or just those participles whose analysis as nonfinite is implausible. Related to this is the question of how, exactly, finiteness develops. In principle, arguments can be made for both of the above positions. However, before attempting to address these questions, the following evidence should be considered:

- (16) *i prišedŭ sta ou goroda.*
 and come-PAP-MASC.NOM.SG stand-AOR-2SG by city-GEN.SG
 'Having arrived, he camped by the city.' (Šaxmatov: 301)
- (17) *prišedši že noči Izęslavŭ i*
 come-PAP-FEM.DAT.SG EMPH night-FEM.DAT.SG Izęslav-NOM and
Rostislavŭ. tou i sŭšędosta
 Rostislav-NOM there and camp-AOR-3DU
 'When night came, Izęslav and Rostislav camped there.' (Šaxmatov: 309)

(16) exemplifies a canonical example of past active participle usage as reflected in descriptive grammars of Old Church Slavonic and in historical grammars of Russian. As such, it is completely compatible with the more traditional analysis of past active participles as non-finite forms. It is by no means a counterexample to the claim made above, but it is somewhat inconclusive in its own right – both analyses are plausible to explain evidence such as (16). As well, (17), an example of the dative absolute construction, shows that case is an applicable category to past active participles. Given this, an argument can be made that in the Kievan Chronicle, participles display both finite and non-finite behavior. Similar behavior can be found in middle Bulgarian sources such as Nikolova 1996 (Dombrowski 2005). However, a full appreciation of what this means is complicated by the question of the relationship between the written language and the spoken language at that time. Given, however, that the gap between the middle Bulgarian written language and the spoken language was large, it is difficult to assess whether the situation at any given point was diglossia or a macaronic mixing of older Church Slavonic syntactic elements with the

vernacular (Mladenov: 61). Given the difficulty of that assessment, then, it is better to focus here on early East Slavic, where the situation is clearer.

Evidence supporting the hypothesis of coexistence between finite and non-finite status may also be found in contemporary East Slavic. Modern Ukrainian, like modern Russian, eventually generalized the resultative participle, without auxiliary, as a finite past tense form that replaced both the aorist, imperfect, and other periphrastic past tenses.⁴ However, in Ukrainian, the masculine singular form of the past tense is formed with the suffix *-v*, suggesting that this form is derived from the past active participle (Shevelov: 418). Darden points out that in medieval Ukrainian, cross-pollination of a sort is found in the perfect, where the past active participle occurs instead of the expected resultative participle:

- (18) doradivši sja esmũ tyx starcov
consult-PAP REFLEXIVE be-PRES-1SG those-GEN elders-GEN
'I (have) consulted those elders.' (Darden 2005: 3)

The question of the coexistence of finite and non-finite interpretations of these verbs – and, by implication, the justification for differentiating this stage as separate – should, then, be considered in the light of all the above evidence. First, though, it is necessary to return to the question posed above about how finiteness develops. Working from the framework proposed by Harris and Campbell 1995, the change in question is a reanalysis of past active participles. Particularly in light of the fact that reanalysis in and of itself does not necessarily affect surface structure, it is difficult to trace the precise spread of reanalysis exclusively through textual evidence. However, treatments of abduction-based sound change lead to the conclusion that during the process of reanalysis, a coexistence of analyses within a speech community is unavoidable for at least a certain amount of time (Anderson 1973: 772-773). Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish two types of coexistence: first, the coexistence of different analyses among a speech community, and second, the coexistence of different analyses within the grammars of individual speakers. When considering the second type of coexistence, a distinction must be made between synchrony and diachrony similar to that made above in section 2.2. One could make the argument that in early East Slavic, past participles were reanalyzed as finite verbs except in dative absolute clauses. If this is the case, two analyses coexist from a diachronic point of view while being functionally separated, and not necessarily related, synchronically.

Returning, however, to the coexistence of different analyses within a speech community, a relevant question is the duration of such coexistence. Both the temporal gap between the Kievan Chronicle and later attestations of medieval

⁴ However, traces of the periphrastic pluperfect may still be observed in Russian dialects (Avanesov 1965: 166).

Ukrainian and the paradigmatic cross-pollination seen in the development of the Ukrainian past tense suggest a prolonged period of coexistence.⁵ The latter phenomena are not conclusive in and of themselves, but nonetheless are more easily explained through the above hypothesis. Given this, it is best to consider this stage as meaningful in its own right, instead of a mere transition point between stages 3 and 5.

2.5 Stage 5

In stage 5 of the proposed typology, participles have evolved into finite verbs. Russian is a prototypical example of this, although it has also occurred in other Slavic languages. In standard Russian, the resultative participle, without an auxiliary, is the only past tense (Miloslavskij 1987: 29). A complex array of phenomena is displayed in dialects, although none retain the aorist or imperfect. Some dialects do feature a “distant past” derived from the periphrastic pluperfect, and others display a wide variety of participial development (Meščerskij: 221 – 230). Nonetheless, both in standard Russian and in all Russian dialects, it can be securely stated that the resultative participle, found in previous periphrastic perfect, has yielded a finite past tense form.

3 Conclusions

The above typology proposes five stages to account for the abovementioned data from Romance and Slavic, uniting data that is generally treated as disparate. Since stage 1 is defined somewhat relatively with regard to individual languages, this typology does not propose that all participles must evolve through stages 1 to 5 consecutively. Instead, the above schema proposes implicational universals. That is to say, a language may jump immediately from stage 1 to stage 3, depending on the mechanics of the participial constructions under consideration – but that once a language reaches any given stage, it cannot develop to reflect an earlier stage.

Although the languages discussed here are all Indo-European, they are nonetheless diverse enough to be of use in proposing a more abstract and generalized framework of participial development. Nonetheless, a necessary further step in subsequent research on this topic would be an examination of additional cross-linguistic data, preferably integrating data from non-Indo-European languages.

⁵ The Ipat'evskaja manuscript, one of our main sources for the Kievan Chronicle, dates from the early 15th century. However, through the comparison of various manuscripts in that textual tradition, it can be established that the Kievan Chronicle reflects reasonably well significantly older layers of the language, although the specifics are still a matter of debate (Šaxmatov 1998: F).

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