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Finiteness and opacity: evidence from the Balkans¹

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It has been recognized for some time that finite clauses in English are opaque domains, closed to binding or control (obligatory coreference) from outside the clause, while non-finite clauses are not. The first formulation of this fact as a postulated principle of Universal Grammar within the Extended Standard Theory research program was the Tensed S Condition of Chomsky (1973), which explicitly stated that relations such as binding could not reach into finite clauses, defined in terms of tense. In the current Government and Binding model (as set forth in Chomsky (1981) and much subsequent work by Chomsky and others), the opacity of finite clauses and the non-opacity of non-finite clauses are derived from more basic principles, namely, the Binding Principles A and B, given in (1) and the formal notions of government and governing category. Government is defined as in (2), following Chomsky (1981:165-66). Governing category is discussed below.

(1) Binding Principles

- a. An anaphor is bound in its governing category.
- b. A pronominal is free in its governing category

(2) Government

In the structure [_Z ... β ... α ... β ...], α governs β iff:

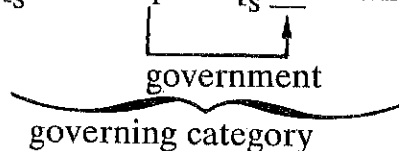
- a. $\alpha = X^0$ (that is, a lexical category such as N or V)
- b. any maximal projection that dominates β also dominates α
- c. α c-commands β (that is, roughly, for any category Y that dominates α , Y or the maximal projection of Y dominates β as well).

One major effect of the Binding Principles is on the subject of an

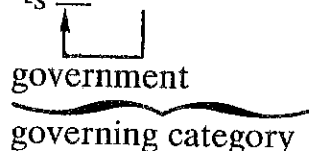
embedded clause: the opposite patterns of possible subjects of infinitives and finite clauses shown in (3), where a finite clause can have only a nominative pronoun as its subject, while an infinitive can have virtually anything except a nominative pronoun, are derivable from principles A and B, given that the subject of a finite clause is governed by the verbal agreement element ('AGR') of its clause, while the subject position of an infinitive, having no AGR to govern it, is governed (if at all) by the matrix verb. According to Chomsky (1981:52), AGR is a complex of person, gender, and number features which, along with the feature [\pm tense], makes up the clause's inflectional element ('INFL'). In English, AGR occurs only in [+tense] clauses. These two patterns of government of the subordinate clause subject are depicted schematically in (4). 'Governing Category' can be defined for our purposes as the lowest S containing both the subject and something which governs it;² the Governing Category thus differs depending on whether or not AGR is available as a governor. PRO indicates a phonetically null noun phrase; see below.

- (3) a. John_i expects {*he/*him_i/him_j/himself/PRO} to win.
 b. John_i expects that {he_i/he_j/*him/*himself/*PRO} will win.

- (4) a. [_S John expects [_S ___ to win]]



- b. [_S John expects that [_S ___ AGR will win]]



Himself is an anaphor, and must therefore be bound in its governing category. It is unacceptable in structure (4b), the finite clause, since there is no possible antecedent for it in its governing category, the lower S. In structure (4a), however, *himself* can be bound by the noun *John*, which is in its governing category, and it is therefore allowed by Binding Principle A. The pronominals *he* and *him* must be free (that is, not bound) in their governing category. In structure (4a) the pronominal must be accusative since it is governed by a verb, and it must be distinct from *John* (since *John* is in the governing category of the pronoun, it must not bind it). In structure (4b), on the other hand, the pronominal must be nominative, since it is governed

by AGR, and it may not be coreferential to *John*: in either case it is not bound by anything inside its lower-clause governing category. PRO is considered to be a 'pronominal anaphor', that is, both a pronominal and an anaphor. In order to avoid the conflicting requirements of the Binding Principles A and B it is allowed to occur only in non-governed positions, where it has no governing category. The position of the dash in (4a) but not (4b) can optionally be ungoverned;³ thus PRO can occur in structure (4a) but not (4b).

If the Binding Principles and the definitions of Government and Governing Category are part of Universal Grammar, the range of possible subjects of a clause must be universally dependent on whether or not that clause contains verbal agreement.⁴ To be more specific, the following predictions about embedded clauses are made by the theory of Government and Binding:

- i. The coreference possibilities of a pronoun subject and the possibility of an anaphor as opposed to a pronoun subject will universally depend on the presence of verbal agreement in the clause; this is because the effect of the Binding Principles A and B is determined by the size of the Governing Category, which in turn is determined by the presence or absence of AGR, as shown in (4).
- ii. Since the case of a pronominal is determined by its governor, the subjects of finite and infinitive clauses will differ in case: a subject governed by AGR (in a structure like (4b)) will be nominative (or whatever case main-clause subjects take), while in a structure like (4a) the embedded clause subject will have the appropriate case for an object of the matrix verb.

A significant test case for the universality of these predictions is provided by several languages spoken in Southeastern Europe: Bulgarian, Albanian, Modern Greek, Rumanian, and Macedonian; all Indo-European, but otherwise not closely related genetically, except for Bulgarian and Macedonian, which are both South Slavic. These languages are very similar typologically, and they share a great many syntactic and non-syntactic characteristics as a result of centuries of contact (the famous Balkan sprachbund). It is nonetheless significant, however, that the construction examined in this paper works exactly the same way in relevant respects in all five languages. Many of the 'Balkanisms' or pan-Balkan features are superficially similar constructions which turn out not to be identical in

detail when looked at more closely. In fact, even the construction I am concerned with here, the inflected infinitive, does vary somewhat among the Balkan languages in usage and in what verbal forms it can contain (see Friedman, to appear). What is significant for my purposes is that whenever and with whatever verb forms it does occur, the pattern of possible subjects is always the same across all the Balkan languages. Contact is not enough to ensure identity of syntactic behavior, although it does encourage similarity. When subtle details such as coreference possibilities within a construction are identical from one language to another some universal principle must be at work, especially when evidence for the same universal principle is found in languages as far from the Balkans both typologically and genetically as Khmer and Vietnamese (Fisher, 1985). In spite of the rather close association among the five Balkan languages, the fact that they all behave exactly as predicted by the Binding Theory is a striking indication of the correctness of this approach to universals.

The Balkan construction of interest with respect to finiteness and opacity is a type of clause, found in each of the languages listed above, which is extremely similar in semantics, function, usage, and external syntax to the infinitive in most European languages,⁵ but contains a finite verb: a verb marked for person and number agreement and marginally also for tense and aspect; in this way it is very much like the inflected infinitive of Portuguese (Zubizarreta, 1980). I will refer to this construction as the 'inflected infinitive', because of its great functional similarity to infinitives in other (including closely related Slavic and Romance) languages; it typically occurs, for example, as the complement of modal and aspectual verbs (*can*, *begin*, *continue*), verbs of volition (*want*), adjectives like *difficult*, nouns such as *intention*, in purpose clauses (we went there *to see him*), and in 'infinitival' interrogatives and relatives (we didn't know *who to blame*; there's *no one to blame*). All five Balkan languages also have another type of subordinate clause, which is fully finite, having both tense and agreement, is introduced by a complementizer similar to English *that*, and occurs in most contexts where the inflected infinitive is not found.

The Balkan 'inflected infinitive' is not strictly speaking an infinitive in the usual sense, since it is at least formally tensed. As we shall see, however, this tense is essentially invariant; morphological present tense marking seems to be used as a default value in this construction and should probably not be considered to be 'real' tense in any meaningful sense. If the pattern of subject of infinitive clauses in languages like English is actually due

to the lack of an AGR element in them, as Government-Binding theory claims, then the inflected infinitive should behave like a finite clause in this respect, since it does contain AGR: the verb of an inflected infinitive clause agrees in person and number with its subject. But if the explanation in terms of agreement is not correct, we might expect the inflected infinitive to behave like English infinitives, which it closely resembles in all ways except the presence of inflection.

A few very simple examples of the inflected infinitive construction are given in (5). In each language the construction consists of a verb, inflected for person and number, preceded by a characteristic particle (Bulgarian and Macedonian *da*, Albanian *të*, Greek *ná*, Rumanian *să*). The clause can of course contain various other material, sometimes including a complementizer, but this need not concern us just yet.

- (5) a. *Iska da otide.* (Bulgarian)
 want-3SG to go-3SG
 'S/he wants to go', or 'S/he wants him/her to go.'
- b. *Zaboraviv da go napravam toa.* (Macedonian)
 forgot-1SG to it do-1SG that
 'I forgot to do that.'
- c. *Dua të vete.* (Albanian)
 want-1SG to go-1SG
 'I want to go.'
- d. *Thelo na tin do.* (Greek)
 want-1SG to her see-1SG
 'I want to see her.'
- e. *Trebuie să mîncam ceva.* (Rumanian)
 must to eat-1PL something
 'We have to eat something.'

The examples in (6) show that the person-number marking of the embedded verb is independent of that of the matrix verb, in all of the Balkan languages.

- (6) a. *Iskaš da otida.* (Bulgarian)
 want-2SG-PRES. to go-1SG-PRES.PERF
 'You want me to go.'
- b. *Ivan saka da čekame.* (Macedonian)
 Ivan wants-3SG to wait-1PL
 'Ivan wants us to wait.'

- c. *Vreau să mergem undeva.* (Rumanian)
 want-1SG to go-1PL somewhere
 'I want us to go somewhere.'
- d. *Thelo na mou grapsi kati.* (Greek)
 want-1SG to me write-3SG something
 'I want her to write me something.'
- e. *Duhet të shpejtojme.* (Albanian)
 must-3SG to hurry-1PL
 'We must hurry/it's necessary (for us) to hurry.'

The verb in the inflected infinitive clause is formally marked for tense and aspect, but, as (7a,b) illustrate, this tense-aspect marking is relatively fixed and not at all related to time reference: the verb is normally present perfective regardless of the tense of the matrix verb or the time reference.

- (7) a. *Iskaha da otideš.* (Bulgarian)
 want-3PL-PAST to go-2SG-PRES.PERF
 'They wanted you to go.'
- b. *Edin den šte iskat da otideš.* (Bulgarian)
 one day will want-3PL to go-2SG-PRES.PERF
 'One day they will want you to go.'

This is not totally invariable, however: at least in Bulgarian and Macedonian there do exist sentences like (8), where the *da* clause contains a formal tense other than present (here past perfect (perfective)). But past tense in this type of clause means *irrealis* rather than *past time*; it is semantically more related to modality than to real tense.

- (8) *Ne si spomnih da bjah otišla.* (Bulgarian)
 not remember-1SG-PAST to be-1SG-PAST gone-F.SG
 'I didn't remember going (and I may well not have gone).'

To summarize the basic facts as presented so far, what we are looking at is a construction that is functionally similar to familiar infinitives, but contains a verb marked marginally for tense-aspect and very clearly and meaningfully for person-number agreement.

The obvious question then is what kind of subject this construction can have: will it follow pattern (3a), as Government-Binding theory predicts, or (3b)? In all of the examples given so far, the embedded clause has no subject; that is, in GB terms its subject is an empty NP; PRO or pro. The fact that a null subject is possible at first glance makes the *da/të/na/să* clauses

look like English infinitives, but in fact this is irrelevant: the Balkan languages are all “pro-drop” languages, and can have null subjects in all types of clauses (including, for instance, the main clauses in (5), (6), (7), and (8)).

The distribution of pronouns and anaphors is more interesting. The facts are summarized in (9a-e), which correspond to the English sentence (3a).⁶

- (9) a. *Ivan_i očkva {toj_(i,J)/ *nego/ *sebe si} da pobedi.*
 (Bulgarian)
 Ivan expects he him himself to wins
- b. *Ivan_i očkuva {toj_(i,J)/ *nego⁷/ *sebe si} da pobedi.*
 (Macedonian)
 Ivan expects he him himself to wins
- c. *Gjoni_i pret {ai_(i,J)/ (*)atë_(J,*i)/ (no anaphor)} të fitojë.*
 (Albanian)
 Gjoni expects he him to wins
- d. *O Yanis_i perimeni na nikisi {aftos_(i,J)}. (Greek)*
 Yanis expects to wins he
O Yanis_i perimeni {()afton_(J,*i)/ ?*ton eafto tou} na nikisi.⁸*
 Yannis expects him himself to wins
- e. *Ion_i se așteaptă sa câștige {el_(i,J)/ *pe el/ (no anaphor)}.*
 Ion REFL expects to wins he him (Rumanian)

The first and most obvious thing to note about this set of sentences is that in all cases the embedded subject may be a pronoun, and must not be an anaphor — exactly as we expect in a clause containing verbal agreement. The binding and government relations in these sentences are the same as in (4b). The pronoun is governed by the agreement element (AGR); therefore the lower S, which contains both the subject and its governor (AGR), is the governing category for the subject, and since there is no possible antecedent for the subject within its own clause, it must be something which can be free in its governing category — namely a pronominal (or a name) and not an anaphor.

Secondly, note that the pronoun subject of the inflected infinitive may be coreferential to the matrix subject, or not. This again is just what Government-Binding theory predicts: a pronominal must be free *in its governing category*, but nothing prevents it from being interpreted as coreferential to some NP outside its governing category (outside the embedded clause, in this case).

Concerning the case of the pronoun subject of the embedded clause, two related points need to be made. First, given that, as we have said, the structure of (9a-e) is analogous to (4b), i.e. that the lower clause subject is governed by AGR, we expect the subject to be nominative (AGR assigns nominative case to its governee, in general, at least in Nominative-Accusative type languages). And indeed, in each language we do find a nominative pronoun (*toj, ai, aftos, el*) as a possible subject in this construction. Secondly, we expect not to find accusative or other verb-assigned cases on the subject, since it is not governed by a verb. This prediction seems not to work out as neatly as one might like in terms of the surface data: Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Rumanian, as expected, exclude objective case pronouns from this position, but Albanian and Greek do appear to allow accusative case subjects in inflected infinitives: the troublesome sentences are those in (10):

- (10) a. *Gjoni pret atë të fitojë.* (Albanian)
 Gjoni expects him to wins
 b. *O Yanis perimeni afton na nikisi.* (Greek)
 Yanis expects him to wins

I will suggest, however, that the underlined accusative pronouns are not really subjects, but matrix clause objects, and that the embedded subject is actually null, or PRO, that is, that the structure of (10a-b) is as shown in (11a-b).

- (11) a. *Gjoni pret atë [_S PRO të fitojë].*
 b. *O Yanis perimeni afton [_S PRO na nikisi].*

There are several kinds of evidence for this structure, both within Albanian and Greek and from parallel structures in Bulgarian. First, in Albanian, *të* clauses can occur with a complementizer, *që*, and when they do there is a difference in word order between a nominative and an accusative 'subject' of the inflected infinitive. The nominative, which follows *që*, is clearly in the subordinate clause, but the accusative appears to fall outside the clause: the structure of (12b) is presumably (12c), parallel to (11). *Atë* in (12b) is governed by *pret*; it receives case and presumably also a theta-role from the verb, and its governing category is clearly the main clause, since it may not corefer with the main clause subject — just like *atë* in (10a) (=9c)).

- (12) a. *Gjoni_i pret që ai_{(i,j)}} të fitojë.*
 Gjoni expects that he to wins
 'Gjonii expects that he(i,j) will win.'

- d. *Vidjah da vliza.*
 'I saw him enter.'

When the matrix object and subordinate clause subject are coreferential, either or both may be null. The same is true with other kinds of subordinate clauses, for example, with the complementizer *če* 'that', where, just as in the Albanian sentences in (12), the accusative precedes the complementizer, while the nominative follows it:

- (15) a. *Vidjah go če toj vlizaše.*
 saw-1SG him that he was-entering
 b. *Vidjah če toj vlizaše*
 c. *Vidjah go če vlizaše.*
 d. *Vidjah če vlizaše.*
 'I saw (him) that he was entering.'

Sentence (14b) is structurally identical to (11), but with a lexical pronoun instead of PRO. Sentences similar to (14b) occur in Greek and Albanian as well; the examples in (16), for instance, also have a subordinate clause subject coreferential to the matrix clause object.¹⁰

- (16) a. *O Yanis ton_i iden na fevgi aftos_i* (Greek)
 Yanis him saw to leaves he
 'Yanis saw him leave.'
 b. *Gjoni e pret atë_i të fitojë ai_i* (Albanian)
 Gjoni him expects him to wins he
 'Gjoni expects him to win.'

Although my data on Greek and Albanian are much less complete than for Bulgarian, the existence of constructions like (16a-b) provides convincing evidence for the reality of structure (11a-b) in these languages, just as the corresponding Bulgarian facts presented above do for Bulgarian.

The Greek sentence (16a) brings up another interesting point bearing on the position of the accusative NP in sentences like (10a) and (10b). Note that when this NP is a clitic pronoun (*ton* 'him' in (16a), as opposed to the non-clitic pronoun *afton* 'him' in (10b)) it appears in the usual position for a clitic object of the matrix clause: proclitic to the matrix verb. If *afton* in (10b) were actually the subject of the subordinate clause, it would not be expected to cliticise to this position. Notice too that the optional clitic copy *e* of the pronoun *atë* in (16b) is clearly in the matrix clause. Once again, Bulgarian also exhibits the same phenomenon. Clitic pronouns in Bulgarian

are preverbal unless this would make the pronoun sentence-initial. In the examples in (15) the clitic pronoun *go* follows the verb; however, if there were any other constituent or constituents preceding the verb, the clitic would move into its normal preverbal position. Compare (14a) to (17), where the sentence-initial slot is filled by an overt subject.

- (17) *Az go vidjah da vliza.*
 I him saw-1SG to enters

Just as in Greek, the position of the clitic clearly identifies it as the object of the matrix verb. I know of no evidence for anything like clitic climbing in the Balkan languages. Together with the other evidence from word order with complementizers and cooccurrence with a coreferential nominative, this makes it quite clear that the accusative NP in the examples in (10) is not in the inflected infinitive clause, but is rather the matrix direct object. I conclude that the proper analysis of these sentences is as shown in (11a) and (11b), and that the Government-Binding prediction that subjects of the inflected infinitive will always be nominative is correct, in spite of superficial counterexamples.

Finally, one additional fact involving the subjects of Balkan 'inflected infinitive' clauses is worth mentioning. Chomsky (1981:167) points out that the subject position of infinitival relatives is ungoverned and must therefore be PRO; this accounts for the acceptability of (18a) but not (18b) in English, since the embedded subject position in (18b) is not PRO, but WH-trace (the trace left by movement of *who* to Comp).

- (18) a. A man to help me...
 b. *A man who to help me...

However, in the Balkan languages the subject of 'infinitival' relatives (with the inflected infinitive construction) is governed by AGR as we have seen, and should therefore not be PRO. And just as predicted by the GB analysis, relative clauses parallel to (18b) do occur in the Balkan languages; the Bulgarian sentence (19) is an example. The WH word *kojto* is, furthermore, nominative; it gets its case from the trace in subject position, which is governed by AGR. This is further evidence for the relation between AGREEMENT and possible subject predicted by the Binding Theory.

- (19) *Čovek, kojto da me pomogne...*
 man who-NOM to me help-3SG
 'A man to help me...'

In conclusion, the facts of the Balkan inflected infinitive provide confirming evidence for proposed linguistic universals on two different levels. First, the descriptive claim that finiteness and opacity are universally, and probably causally, related is supported by the Balkan facts: a clause containing a finite verb is an opaque domain, even if it is functionally infinitive-like. It is significant for the proper description of linguistic universals that it is the syntactic form of a clause and *not* its function that determines whether or not it is an opaque domain; functional or semantic categories appear to be irrelevant to the determination of opacity. In spite of its functional similarity to infinitives in other languages, the Balkan inflected infinitive behaves just like other finite clauses with respect to opacity.

Secondly, on a theoretical plane, the Government-Binding version of Universal Grammar, including Binding Principles A and B, government of subjects by the AGREement element of the clause, and case assignment by the governing element, is able to give a very neat, simple account of the Balkan facts and of the relation between finiteness and opacity, using only a few very general principles. While other accounts are undoubtedly possible, the fact that it handles these facts so easily does provide considerable support for the GB approach in general, and specifically for the Binding Principles and the place of AGREement in the theory of Government. The GB principles predict that whenever a clause contains AGR (i.e. some form of agreement with the subject), it will be opaque, and whenever it does not contain AGR, it will not be opaque. This leads us to predict a typology of languages in which a language may 'chose' to have AGR or not, in certain types of clauses, particularly including tenseless or semantically infinitive-like ones. Once this choice is made, for a particular clause type, the range of possible subjects of that clause type is set automatically by the principles mentioned above; we thus predict for instance that no language will have a clause type which contains no agreement element but can still have a nominative subject, nor one which does contain AGR but has an accusative or reflexive subject. In the languages studied so far, including the Balkan languages, this prediction does hold.

NOTES

1. Thanks are due to Rada Hanu, Manolis Serfiotis, Anna Agathangelou, Elez Biberai, Ismail Haznedari, and Vasile Munteanu for sharing their intuitions with me, to Christina Kramer for help with Macedonian, and to Victor Friedman and the editors of this volume for comments on an earlier version of this paper.
2. For a much more detailed definition of Governing Category, including the role of an "accessible *Subject*", see Chomsky (1981).
3. The mechanism through which this optionality is achieved is known as S_1 Deletion. Like all other clauses, infinitives have the underlying structure [S_1 [S ...]]. A matrix verb cannot govern the subject position of the clause as long as the S_1 is present; the subject is then ungoverned and can (in fact must) be PRO. In English and other languages with "Accusative with Infinitive" constructions, the S_1 of the infinitival clause is optionally deleted, allowing the matrix verb to govern its subject position, as in (4a) in the text.
4. Or perhaps tense; I will not go into all of the arguments for or against taking agreement or tense or both as the defining characteristic (and governor of the subject) of a finite clause here, but simply assume along with much recent work that the presence of agreement is the relevant parameter. There is some evidence from Turkish (George and Kornfilt (1981)) and Portuguese (Rouveret (1980), Zubizarreta (1980)) that constructions with agreement but no tense behave as if they were finite; Fisher (1985) suggests that Khmer clauses with tense but no agreement are not opaque domains. Recent unpublished work on Kashmiri by Elena Bashir (University of Michigan) indicates that it may be specifically *person* agreement, and not number or gender agreement, that is crucial for opacity. However, there is also some evidence from Catalan (Picallo (1984)) that both tense and agreement are needed for a clause to be fully finite. The Balkan data presented in this paper would be amenable to an account in terms of tense, or more generally in terms of the presence of inflection, as well.
5. For detailed discussion of the infinitive-like character of this construction, see Kazazis (1965), Joseph (1983), Schaller (1975), and the many references cited in them. I do not claim that this construction *is* an infinitive, only that it fills the functions of an infinitive; it is in fact a finite construction in the sense that it does contain AGR.
6. These correspond to (3a) rather than (3b) (that is, to the English infinitive rather than the *that* clause) in the sense that in general matrix verbs that take a *to*-infinitive complement in English take an inflected infinitive in the Balkan languages. Just as in English, certain verbs can have either an inflected complement or a clause with a complementizer and a fully finite verb (generally future tense with a matrix verb like *expect*). Thus for example, alongside (9a), Bulgarian has (i):

(i) *ivan očakva če toj šte pobedi.*
Ivan expects that he will win

The semantic and usage differences between the construction in (i) and that in (9) are very similar to those between *that* clauses and infinitives in English, as mentioned earlier.
7. Victor Friedman has pointed out to me that *Ivan go očekuva nego da pobedi* is grammatical with the meaning 'Ivan waits for him in order to win'. Here *nego* (with its clitic copy *go*) is the object of the matrix clause, and the subject of the embedded clause is PRO controlled by *Ivan*.

8. Some Greek speakers do apparently accept *ton eafto tou* 'himself' here. For these speakers it is possible either that *ton eafto tou* is not in the embedded clause at all (see example (13) and discussion below it in the text), or that it is not an anaphor. The latter possibility is not as unlikely as it may seem. After all there are English speakers — myself included — who are totally bewildered by the stars that so often turn up on 'each other' sentences in the literature (I find sentences like 'We finally all got to find out where each other live' perfectly normal and acceptable). The simplest explanation for this is that in some dialects *each other* just is not an anaphor in the GB sense.
9. For a more detailed discussion of this and similar constructions in Bulgarian, see Rudin (to appear).
10. It should be noted that in all three languages — Bulgarian, Greek, and Albanian — sentences like (14b) and (16a,b) are quite emphatic; speakers often consider them odd unless presented with an appropriate pragmatic context.

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