

From dialectal to standard feature: the case of the Macedonian *habere*-perfect

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Abstract

The paper deals with a sweeping language change that is underway in the standard Macedonian verbal system: functional redistribution of the two perfect constructions. The contact-induced and dialectal habere-perfect is spreading into the functional zone of the inherited resultative Slavic esse-perfect, freeing the latter to specialize for its inferential, reportative, admirative and other non-factual meanings. Originally a marginal dialectal form, the habere-perfect has become the main exponent of resultative meanings in Macedonian. The authors find regular patterning behind the continuing expansion of the habere-perfect into the standard registers and examine the factors influencing this process. The comparison of the results of the two investigations conducted demonstrates that the habere-perfect is gaining ground in the standard language along the established grammaticalization path.

1 Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the motivations and mechanisms of expansion of the *habere*-perfect in standard registers of the Macedonian language. We investigate the role of the regular path of grammaticalization (see Lindstedt 2000, Heine/Kuteva 2006, Dahl 2000) and the functional redistribution of the verb forms in the increased use of the *habere*-perfect, as well as the socio-cultural and other factors affecting this process.

The Macedonian *habere*-perfect (example 1 below) expresses possessive resultativity (see Gołąb 1983, Maslov 1988, Usikova 1983). This term reflects its possessive character in the first stages of grammaticalization (see Mitkovska/Bužarovska 2008, Bužarovska/Mitkovska 2010) and also alludes to the fact that it has developed from a resultative possessive nominal construction.

The *habere*-perfect construction consists of the verb *ima* ('have'), inflected for person and number, and an invariable passive past participle with a strong resultative meaning.

- (1) *Petar veke ja ima napišano statijata.*
'Petar **has** already **written** the paper.'

As a contact-induced innovation, it exists in the Macedonian temporal system alongside the inherited Slavic periphrastic *esse*-perfect (example 2), the aorist (example 3) and the imperfect (example 4).

- (2) *Petar mi kaža deka ja napišal statijata.*
'Peter told me that he **had written** the paper.'
(3) *Petar ja napiša statijata včera.*
'Peter **wrote** the paper yesterday.'
(4) *Petar ja pišuvaže statijata cela nedela.*
'Peter **was writing** the paper all week.'

The old *esse*-perfect, known as the "indefinite past tense" (Koneski 1987), which functions as an unmarked construction for expressing indefinite past events, has also retained its anteriority (i.e. the perfect) functions, being most often used for experiential types of

meaning. On the other hand, this tense has spread into the irrealis domain in Macedonian, most notably into evidentiality, and has assumed various functions such as coding inferential and reported past, admirative, dubitative and similar meanings. In certain contexts, especially in the third person, the perfect and the evidential functions are impossible to distinguish. Example (5) could be interpreted as hearsay or as a resultative event. We presume that this ambiguity originally served as an initial impetus for the rise of the new *habere*-perfect and also for its spread in standard Macedonian.

- (5) *Petar ja napišal statijata.*
'Peter **has written** the paper (here it is).'
'Peter **has written** the paper (I have heard).'

Standard Macedonian is based on central western dialects where both perfects are in use. The *habere*-perfect was accepted by the standard norm and was described in the first grammar books (cf. Lunt (1952: 99 f.), Koneski (1953/1987: 502-506)). Nevertheless, in the early stages of standardization, the *habere*-perfect was not readily accepted as a standard form, probably due to the influence of the other two main dialects (eastern and northern) and the idiom of the capital, Skopje, where it was not present.

2 History of the *habere*-perfect in Macedonian

The *habere*-perfect first appeared in south-western dialects under the influence of Arumanian and Greek, as has been pointed out by many authors (see Elliot 2001, Graves 2000). Two "domestic" grammatical properties facilitated its borrowing: the semi-auxiliary status of *imatb* in Old Church Slavonic, as it could be used with a deontic modal meaning (Elliot 2001: 38), and the existence of an isofunctional analytic syntactic pattern that consisted of an auxiliary 'be' and a participle. The original nominal resultative *habere*-construction consisted of the lexical verb *ima* ('have') and a direct object nominal (henceforth "DO nominal") modified by an inherently resultative past passive participle that agrees with its nominal head. This construction is still in use in contemporary Macedonian (see Topolinjska 1983), as illustrated in example (6).

- (6) *Imame nekolku registrirani pretstavnici.*
'We **have** several **registered** representatives.'

The source construction was first attested at the beginning of the 18th century (cf. Koneski 1986: 200 f.), and throughout the next two centuries it evolved into a perfect. By the middle of the 19th century, both the resultative nominal and the perfect constructions were in parallel use, and constructions with gender and number markers on the participle and intermediate semantics were common, as attested in the folk stories from central western dialects (see Velkovska 1985) as well as from south-eastern dialects (cf. Gajdova 2002: 94, Topolinjska 1995: 209). During that period, they were often ambiguous between the two interpretations, especially when the object, i.e. the affected entity, was neuter in gender. In example (7a) there is gender agreement between the participle and the DO nominal, but the construction has a dynamic semantics. Such cases were more recently attested in some dialects outside those which regularly employ the *habere*-perfect, as in example (7b) from the north-east region.¹

- (7) a. *Imame edno registrirano pretstavništvo.*²
'We **have** one office **registered.**' or 'We have registered one office.'
b. *Imam sed'm jazovci utepani.*
'I **have killed** seven badgers.'

¹ Topolinjska (1983: 30), taken from Vidoeski, B., *Kumanovski ot govor*. Skopje 1962, p. 225.

² Both examples are taken from Mitkovska/Bužarovska (2008: 134).

By the end of the 19th century, however, the *habere*-perfect had been fully grammaticalized in the western and southern dialects, the invariant participle form had become stable and although the nominal resultative is still in use, the two constructions are now generally distinguished (with occasional overlapping). The verb *ima* has developed into an auxiliary in Macedonian and, in combination with the participle, builds regular paradigms for both past (*imaše videno*, *imal videno*, *beše imal videno* ('had seen')) and future (*ke ima videno* ('will have seen'), *ke imaše videno* ('would have seen')). They have a variable regional and functional distribution and enter into complex relations with the older *be*-forms.³ In this paper we restrict our discussion to the forms with the auxiliary in present tense, as a possessive perfect, referring to them with the term *habere*-perfect.⁴

3 Regional and stylistic distribution

The *habere*-perfect was originally a dialectal feature restricted to the western and southern dialects. According to Topolinjska (1995: 206), that area is the center of the most typical Balkanisms, and this type of perfect is characteristic for Romance languages, as well as for Greek and Albanian. It was most widely spread in the south-west, considerably present in some south-east dialects and not so common in the central part of southern dialects. Spreading from the west and the south to the east and the north, the *habere*-perfect constructions are nowadays gradually penetrating eastern dialects (cf. Koneski 1986: 200). In the far south-west corner the *esse*-perfect has almost been lost to the *habere*-perfect (cf. Topolinjska 1995: 206). Thus, this trend of replacement of the *esse*-perfect with the *habere*-perfect from the south-western dialects of the Republic of Macedonia (see Marković 2007, Graves 2000) is gaining ground in the east and in the north of the country (including the capital), where it competes with the *esse*-perfect. This spread is accompanied by functional differentiation between the *habere*-perfect and *esse*-perfect, the latter becoming more and more specialized for evidential uses.

With the standardization of Macedonian in 1945, the dialectal *habere*-perfect was promoted to the level of a standard construction. The new prestigious position, through media and education, enabled its diffusion into other dialects throughout the whole linguistic territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Consequently, the use of the *habere*-perfect was steadily growing in the standard, as noted by authors such as Koneski (1986, 1987), Friedman (1977), and later Velkovska (1998). However, over the last two decades the use of the *habere*-perfect has been on the increase in the standard language in contexts where traditionally the *esse*-perfect was used. The process of semantic specialization of the *esse*-perfect as the main means for expressing reported and/or unwitnessed past events is now in full swing.

The status of the *habere*-perfect in the Macedonian standard language is complex. It was accepted by the norm from the very beginning, but it was not readily used by all speakers neither in written nor in spoken discourse. Friedman (1977: 93), citing Lunt (1952), notes that in the capital, Skopje, the *habere*-perfect is not native to the Skopje dialect, and thus "there exists a literary subdialect which never uses it, the *sum* (*esse*) form being used instead." He admits, however, that "the *habere* form is spreading throughout the area where literary Macedonian is taught."

In the same vein, Panoska (1983: 79) comments that the *habere*-perfect is quite common in spoken discourse and folk stories, but rather restricted in writing. We assume that she refers to dialectal spoken language, because she further notes that these forms are commonly found in folk stories from western and south-western areas but rarely in eastern parts of the country. As regards the contemporary literary genre, Panoska (1983: 80-82) notices that it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions, although authors with western dialect background tend to

³ See Lunt (1952), Koneski (1987) and Friedman (1977), among others.

⁴ Also known as possessive perfect (Heine 2006, Nomachi 2006).

use the *habere*-perfect more regularly. It is significant, nevertheless, that all authors choose *ima*-constructions, as “a conscious approach” (Panoska 1983: 83), because they feel them as more expressive and colloquial.

Velkovska (1998: 73 f.) also examines the use of the *habere*-perfect constructions in post-standardization literary works (since 1945), and arrives at the conclusion that many authors have increased the use of these forms in their more recent works compared to the earlier ones.

Arsova-Nikolić (1970), analysing the translations of the novels *The Great Gatsby* and *Great Expectations* from English into Macedonian, noted that the English Present Perfect Simple was rarely translated with the *habere*-perfect, i.e. only 2.7 %, while the *esse*-perfect occurred in 38 % of the cases, and simple past tenses⁵ in 45.5 %. Although the English Present Perfect is not a complete functional equivalent of the Macedonian *habere*-perfect, its low occurrence in the translations is indicative of its status in the Macedonian standard variant at that time.

Even though the use of the *habere*-perfect in the literary genre may be indicative, we believe that Panoska’s observations are still applicable today. To diagnose the level of the *habere*-perfect presence in the standard, we should look in the press and other formal written documents as well as public speech performances. Velkovska (1998: 70-72) finds that it is more often used in journalistic style than in scientific. Elliot (2001: 44) found most of her *habere*-perfect written examples in entertainment publications. She attributes the low distribution of this form in the press to its colloquial nature: “In the literary language as it is spoken in the capital, Skopje (whose traditional dialect lacks the *habere*-perfect), a strong tendency exists for the *habere*-perfect to occur in informal and colloquial speech, and likewise, for it to be used more by younger than older generation.”

Until 1990 research findings indicate that the distribution of the *habere*-perfect was still influenced by dialectal and stylistic factors. However, the situation on the ground is rapidly changing. With the range of use of standard Macedonian on the increase since the independence in the last two decades, we are witnessing a noticeable spread of this construction in both written and spoken registers. These changes call for more comprehensive research of the standard language variants.

4 The functions of *habere*-perfect in the standard (administrative and journalistic register)

In order to examine the distribution of the *habere*-perfect in more formal registers of the standard, we analyzed over 300 examples with the *habere*-perfect from journalistic and administrative registers.⁶ Given that in such texts *habere*-perfects are quite rare in comparison to other tenses, our examples were compiled from a relatively large corpus of daily newspapers (around forty issues) and administrative texts (about 1,000 pages). The following four types of *habere*-constructions were established: nominal resultative *habere*-constructions (henceforth “N-resultatives”) in which the participle functions as an adjectival modification, and three tense-like types of *habere*-perfect: possessive-existential perfect (“PE-perfect”), the perfect of result and the experiential perfect.

4.1 Nominal Resultatives and Possessive-Existential Perfects

The nominal resultatives together with possessive-existential perfects, as exponents of the category of resultativity (cf. Friedman 1977: 98), belong to statal resultatives. They both place a stronger emphasis on the present state, with current relevance (CR) understood strictly as focusing on the material result of a past event, while the past event serves only as background knowledge. The basic difference between the two constructions is that the N-resultative

⁵ Arsova-Nikolić counted the aorist and imperfect forms together.

⁶ The results were published in Mitkovska/Bužarovska (2008).

illustrated in (8) does not imply that the clausal subject referent performs a resultative activity, i.e. the referent of *have* may not be necessarily the agent of the past resultative activity. What is foregrounded is that the subject referent is the “owner” of the resultant state. The PE-perfect construction in (9), on the other hand, makes it evident that the agent and the “owner” of the result are one and the same entity.

- (8) *AdoreMe... ima sobrani investicii od okolu 8 milioni dolari.*
(info.mk/News/LoadNews/1231319)
'AdoreMe ... **has accumulated** about 8 million dollars investments.'
- (9) *Gardner tvrdi deka ima sobrano ogromen broj na dokumenti i fotografii.*
(crnobelo.com/.../20789-neuspesna-izmama-titani...)
'Gardner claims that he **has collected** a huge number of documents and photos.'

N-resultatives and PE-perfects share structural properties: the participles in both are built from transitive perfective verbs, their subjects refer to human beings or metonymically to groups of people (places or institutions) and the DO noun phrase is always indefinite. This supports the assumptions expressed by many authors (see, notably, Koneski 1987, Detges 2000, Elliott 2001, Drinka 2001) that the *habere*-perfect has developed from the possessive construction through the grammaticalization of the N-resultative construction.

4.2 Perfect of Result

The next stage is represented by the type of perfect called “the perfect of result”, illustrated in (10). Here the main communicative focus still falls on the resultant state, thus having the notion of CR as its central meaning, albeit not necessarily understood in its strictly concrete sense. The event moves to the foreground as the statal (possessive) meaning of *ima* (‘have’) gets weaker and the construction becomes more verbal.

- (10) *Trenerot se čini dobro go ima proučeno protivnikot. (Utrinski 30.06.07)*
'It seems that the coach **has studied** the opponent well.'

In this type of *habere*-perfect constructions the participles are still mostly derived from perfective verbs, mainly transitive, and the clausal subject is predominantly human. However, verbal complements other than noun phrases (prepositional phrases or dependent clauses) are also present, and a number of intransitive and reflexive verbs are encountered as well. The most significant difference compared to the PE-perfect is the loosened requirement on the non-referentiality of the DO: both indefinite and definite direct objects are found in the corpus.

The verbs used in most of the examples belong to achievements: *ima osvoeno* (‘has conquered’), *ima sprovedeno* (‘has conducted’), *ima postignato* (‘has achieved’), *ima proučeno* (‘has studied’) etc. which convey that the respective achievement has relevance for the present moment. The meaning of current relevance is often foregrounded by a determiner that singles out the successful participant, such as *samo* (‘alone’), *site* (‘all’), *edinstveniot* (‘the only’) or a positive manner adverb, such as *dobro* (‘well’), *uspešno* (‘successfully’), which emphasize the successful completion of the activity.

4.3 Experiential Perfect

Finally, only a small number of *habere*-perfect examples with experiential semantics were found in administrative and journalistic texts (example 11).

- (11) *Dimitrievski... pred da se preseli vo Španija ima igrano za ekipata na Katar Sport. (Dnevnik 24.06.2014)*
'Dimitrievski... before he moved to Spain ... **had played** for the Qatar Sport team.'

The meaning of current relevance is somewhat weaker in this semantic type of the *habere*-perfect. This may be attributed to a shift in focus which now is placed on the present

relevance of an agent's past experience. The agent, as a result of experiencing the activity in the past, possesses certain knowledge of that activity. The transitive activities in this type of perfect are usually temporally unbounded, which requires the use of the imperfective participle. However, intransitive activities are also quite common.

The distribution of *habere*-perfect types in the corpus is shown in Table 1. Of all instances of the *habere*-perfect in our corpus, half were used as PE-perfect, and very few as experiential, partly due to the lack of such situations in formal registers. These results show that in formal registers the *habere*-perfect is predominantly used in its prototypical functions (PE-perfect and Perfect of Result), though significant differences exist between the distribution of these types in administrative and journalistic texts. The rise of Perfect of Result in journalistic style indicates the steady spread of the construction in contexts characterised by more colloquial nature. This is the reason also for a higher occurrence of Experiential Perfect in journalistic texts, even though the number of tokens is too low for definite conclusions.⁷

Table 1. Distribution of the *habere*-perfect along the established functions

	Administrative Style		Journalistic Style		Total	
Possessive-Existential	74	71 %	77	44 %	151	54.5 %
Perfect of Result	29	28 %	85	49 %	114	40.5 %
Experiential Perfect	1	1 %	13	7 %	14	5 %
Total	104	100 %	175	100 %	279	100 %

This distribution mirrors the cross-linguistic grammaticalization path of the perfect gram, established by various typologists (see Dahl 2000, Heine/Kuteva 2006). In Figure 1 we give the graphical representation of the evolution of the perfect gram proposed by Lindstedt (2000).

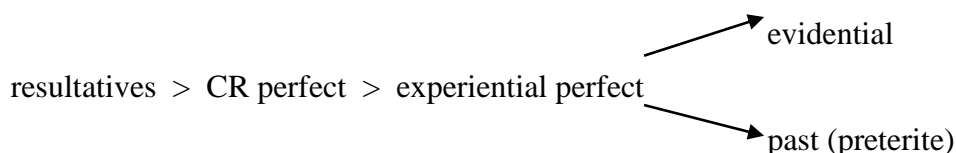


Figure 1. Grammaticalization of the Perfect according to Lindstedt (2000).

Lindstedt (2000) defines several stages in the grammaticalization process of the perfect: resultative, CR perfect, experiential perfect. The shift from resultative to perfect occurs when the focus shifts from “current result” to “current relevance” caused by the recruitment of atelic verbs into the perfect construction (cf. Lindstedt 2000: 368). As a result, the possessive meaning weakens and the perfect construction acquires a dynamic, actional meaning (CR perfect). As the construction spreads across the lexicon into other contexts, the “current relevance” implicature weakens and the focus gradually moves from a resultant present state of a past event onto the event itself.

The second shift involves the development of the experiential function from the perfect of result. The experiential perfect indicates that “certain qualities or knowledge are attributable to the agent due to past experiences” (Bybee/Perkins/Pagliuca 1994: 62). The subjectification of the result of the past event from the external situation to the subject creates conditions for the development of the category of evidentiality, which Lindstedt (2000: 375) calls “indirective”. On the other hand, the frequent use of the experiential perfect without any

⁷ We think that the ratio may lead to a wrong conclusion about the development of the experiential perfect function in *habere*-perfect. The nature of the administrative register does not favor the use of experiential perfect. The number of tokens is very low in both types of texts and the percentage difference compared to the other two situations is rather high in both (71+28: 1/ 44+49: 7).

temporal specification paves the way for the rise of a stronger temporal inference in specific contexts which presumably has triggered the further development of the perfect towards the anteriority⁸ function (cf. Mitkovska/Bužarovska 2008:131 f.). At this stage, the indefinite past, acquiring tense-like properties, can turn into a general past (preterite), as has happened in many European languages.

5 The Research Survey

To check these results, we administered a questionnaire among 150 native speakers divided into two age groups, one group of 50 speakers older than 30 years, and one group of 100 speakers younger than 30.⁹ The questionnaire consisted of 27 examples attested in different standard registers with *habere*-perfect, representing 9 situations of each type (PE-perfect, Perfect of Result, Experiential Perfect). They represented various resultative situations in all three established functions. The participants were asked to put the verb, given in its citation form, into the most appropriate tense for the situation as they would use in the standard variety of Macedonian. Example (12) presents one of the situations.

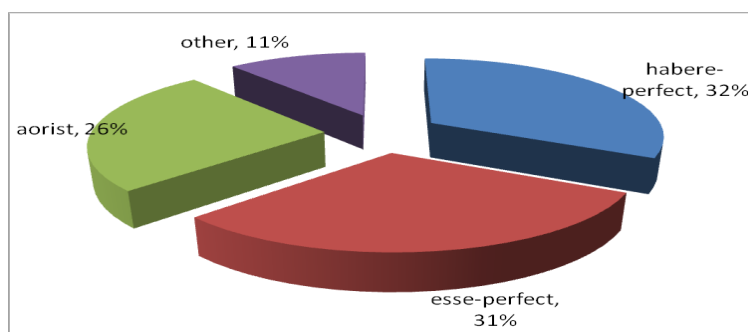
- (12) *Ne sum gotov. Trevata ja iskosiv, no cvekinjata ušte _____.* (NE GI POLIE)
 ‘I am not ready. I finished mowing the grass, but I _____ the flowers yet. (NOT WATER)’

The research was conducted to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent will the speakers use the *habere*-perfect, and in which functions in particular?
2. What other rival tenses will be used in each designated function instead of the *habere*-perfect? What will their distribution be along these functions?
3. What is the influence of the extra-linguistic factors of age and provenience in shaping this distribution?

5.1 Distribution of Tenses

As expected, the speakers chose different verb forms for expressing the given situations, since the Macedonian language has several verb forms with overlapping functions. Graph 1 presents the represented tenses. It is no surprise that the *habere*-perfect and the *esse*-perfect dominated, but their almost equal distribution is rather telling. It means that Macedonian speakers choose both forms equally, which may not have been the case earlier, judging by the use of the tenses in the literary texts. The choice of the aorist is also expected, because this Macedonian tense is bound to perfective aspect, and in telic constructions it presents the situation as resultative. Other verb forms represented were *esse*-passives (6 %), present tense (3 %) and imperfect (2 %).

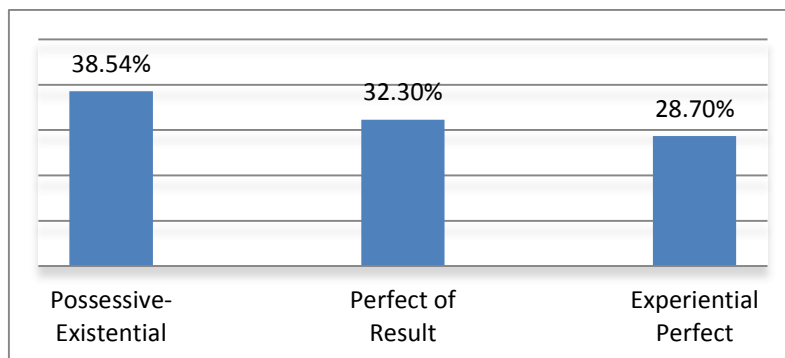


Graph 1. Verb forms used in the speakers answers in the questionnaire

⁸ The term “anteriority” is used variably in the literature on the perfect, but here we use it to indicate that something happened at some indefinite time before the present moment.

⁹ More detailed description of the research is given in Mitkovska/Bužarovska (2011).

The overall results of the distribution of the *habere*-perfect along the perfect sub-functions shown on Graph 2 correspond to the survey of the administrative-journalistic register, confirming the predominance of the possessive-existential function in the *habere*-perfect. The other two types, perfect of results and the existential perfect, are represented with gradually declining numbers in the same order as in the previous study. It is significant, however, that the *habere*-perfect is used much more often in the experiential function here than it has been encountered in the administrative-journalistic register. This is probably due to the more colloquial nature of some of the situations in the questionnaire. The use of the *habere*-perfect in the experiential function in such situations confirms our hypothesis that this form is spreading in this function in the spoken standard.



Graph 2. Percentage of *habere*-perfect constructions distributed along the perfect types

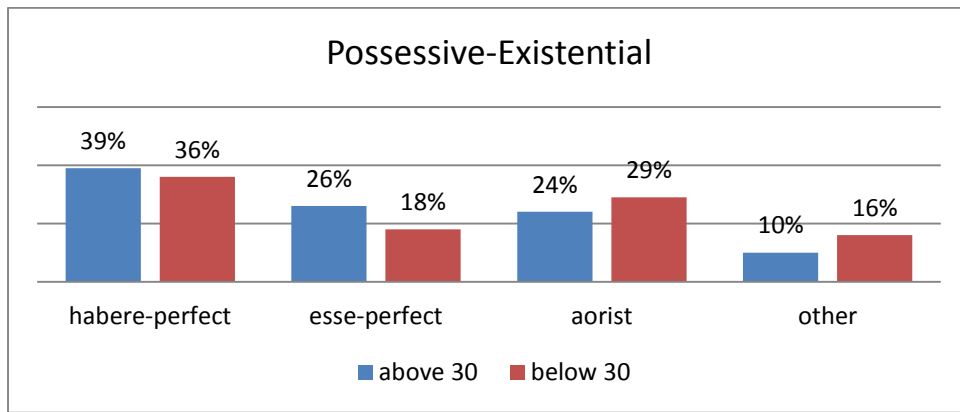
5.2 Factors influencing the use of *habere*-perfect

5.2.1 Age

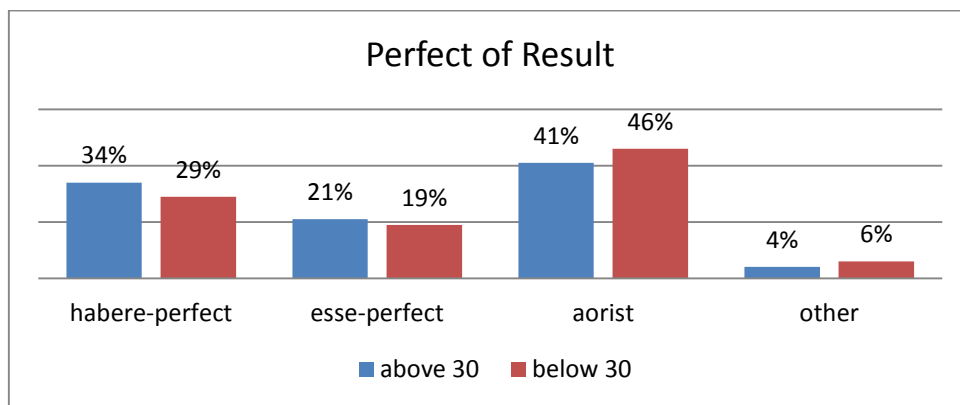
One of the main aims of the questionnaire was to test our observation that in the colloquial register younger speakers from all parts of Macedonia use the *habere*-perfect more often than older speakers. We wanted to investigate if this would be the case in their standard language variant. In the overall results the difference was very small: the *habere*-perfect was chosen in 32 % of all cases by speakers above 30, and in 33 % by speakers below 30. However, the analysis of the verb forms distributed along the sub-types rendered some interesting results. First of all, it turned out that for each situation a particular form dominated, which was in correlation with the prototype function of that form: the *habere*-perfect for possessive-existential, the aorist for perfect of result and the *esse*-perfect for experiential perfect types. Graphs 3, 4 and 5 show separately the percentage of the verb forms used by each age group to express the three perfect functions.

In possessive-existential situations (Graph 3) and in perfect of result situations (Graph 4), older speakers used the *habere*-perfect slightly more often, but they also used the *esse*-perfect more than the younger speakers. The aorist, on the other hand, was preferred by the younger group.

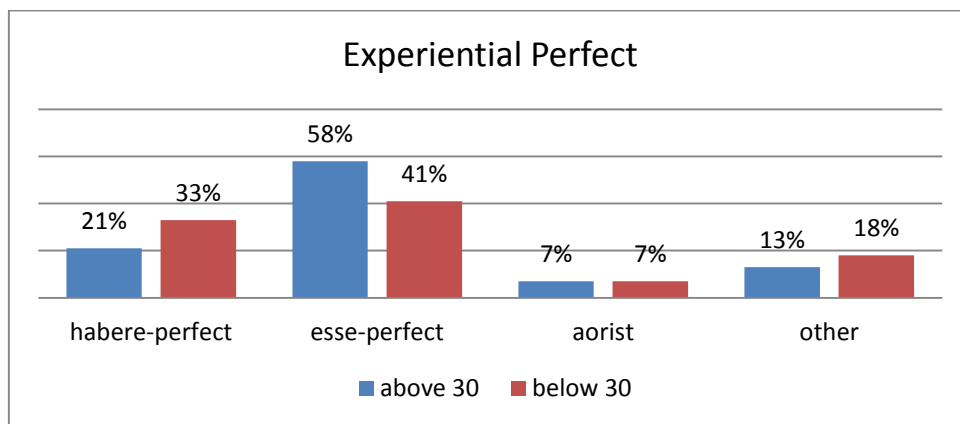
In experiential situations (Graph 5) we have a different situation: younger speakers preferred the *habere*-perfect in comparison to the older group, who chose the *esse*-perfect much more often in these situations. This is a sign of a more conservative stance of the older group. The experiential function is the strongest perfect function retained in the old Slavic *esse*-perfect. Younger speakers, on the other hand, tend to use the *habere*-perfect in this function very often in their colloquial jargon. This is reflected in their standard variant as well.



Graph 3. Distribution of the verb forms depending on age in possessive-existential situations



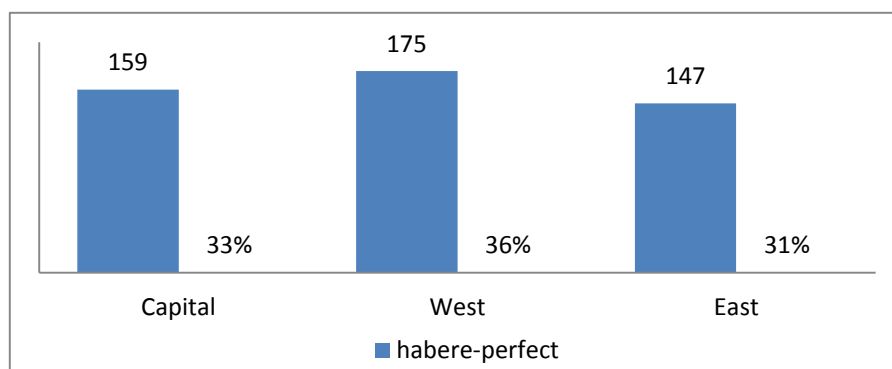
Graph 4. Distribution of the verb forms depending on age in perfect of result situations



Graph 5. Distribution of the verb forms depending on age in experiential situations

5.2.2 Provenience

One important question when investigating the use of the *habere*-perfect in Macedonian is whether its occurrence is related to the speaker's native dialect. If that was the case, we would expect speakers from the west, where the *habere*-perfect has long been established as a regular construction, to choose it in the standard use more often. The presented questionnaire from Mitkovska/Bužarovska (2011) did not yield enough information about the influence of the regional origin of the speakers in their choice of the *habere*-perfect. Most of the participants were Skopje speakers (they had lived in Skopje more than 10 years). In a previous questionnaire (see Bužarovska/Mitkovska 2010) studying the use of the *habere*-perfect in more spoken situations, we obtained a balanced number of participants from the three relevant regions. The overall results (Graph 6) indicate that the difference is not significant, even though the speakers from the west were slightly more inclined to use the *habere*-perfect than those from the east (36 % compared to 31 %), with Skopje speakers performing somewhat in the middle (33 %). We got similar proportions for all types of situations. This means that the feeling of the speakers for the appropriateness of the *habere*-perfect for the standard use is not considerably influenced by their home idiom.



Graph 6. Distribution of the used *habere*-perfect along speakers from different regions

6 Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to show that the *habere*-perfect has gradually made its way into the standard Macedonian language. It started as a regional feature in the south-western dialects of the language in the 18th century with a tendency to spread to the east and north-east. It was established in the central-west dialects when they served as a base for codification of the Macedonian language in the first half of the 20th century. The acceptance of the *habere*-perfect in the standard has facilitated its spread across the Macedonian dialects. However, we have shown that the *habere*-perfect has been gaining ground in the standard gradually and systematically, along the established grammaticalization path. Its occurrence in the most formal texts is limited to functions that characterize earlier phases of the development of perfect constructions. Resultative situations are mostly rendered by the aorist/imperfect, the *esse*-perfect and the passive. Our research indicates that the *habere*-perfect still carries the colloquial character: in the journalistic register it is mainly encountered in entertainment sections, and speakers choose it more often in sentences expressing less formal situations.

An important finding of our research is that the increase in use of the *habere*-perfect among younger speakers is due to their growing tendency to use the *habere*-perfect in experiential functions. This leads to the progressive replacement of the old *esse*-perfect, which has retained its perfect character mainly for expressing experiential situations, with the *habere*-perfect. This can probably be attributed to the tendency of generalization of the *habere*-perfect for coding all resultative situations, and, as a result, the *esse*-perfect remains solely for evidential or modal contexts. Such differentiation is motivated by the need for

transparency in form-function interface. As the division becomes more pronounced in the colloquial standard, we can expect it to spread across other standard registers as well.

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