A formal account of the conditional in its cross-Slavic variation

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The talk will address the morphosyntax of the **analytic conditional** from a cross-Slavic perspective. Examples from major modern East, South, and West Slavic languages are given in (1), (2), and (3), respectively:[1,2]

(1)	a.	xadzila <u>by</u> / xadzic' <u>by</u>	**Bel**	(3)	a.	přinesla <u>bych</u>	**Cze**
	b.	počitala <u>by</u> / počitať <u>by</u>	**Rus**		b.	njasła <u>by</u>	**LSb**
	c.	xodyla <u>by</u> / xodyty <u>by</u>	**Ukr**		c.	czytała<u>bym</u> / czytać <u>by</u> /	
(2)	a.	nosila <u>bi(h)</u>	**BCS**[3]			czytano <u>by</u>	**Pol**
	b.	kazala <u>bix</u>	**Bul**		d.	volala <u>by som</u>	**Slk**
	c.	došla <u>bi</u>	**Mac**		e.	njesła <u>bych</u>	**USb**
	d.	rekla <u>bi</u>	**Sln**				

Descriptively, three groups of languages emerge:

(i) **Cze Slk USb · BCS Bul**
Inflecting auxiliary (*bi*/*by*-PERSON/NUMBER) that combines only with *l*-participles;

(ii) **LSb · Mac Sln**
Non-inflecting auxiliary (*bi*/*by*) that combines only with *l*-participles;

(iii) **Pol · Bel Rus Ukr**
Non-inflecting auxiliary (*bi*/*by*) that combines with *l*-forms/participles but also with non-finite/impersonal verb forms (infinitives, *no/to*-forms, etc.).

While (i) represents the initial state inherited from Proto-Slavic, (ii) and (iii) reflect more recent developments. Following Garde (1964: 88), I argue that the availability of non-finite/impersonal conditionals correlates with the availability of a particle. In **East Slavic languages**, the latter is the diachronic byproduct of the relatively recent development of a new agreement pattern in (former) *l*-periphrases – NUMBER/GENDER rather than PERSON/NUMBER (see Junghanns 1995: 8). This new pattern has rendered East Slavic *l*-forms finite as their agreement licenses a nominative subject NP provided that the IP (or FinP/AgrP/TP) contains a mood/tense operator (covert $Op_{⟦PST⟧}$ or overt $by_{⟦COND⟧}$, respectively):

(4) **Bel Rus Ukr**
a. [$_{IP}$ $Op_{⟦PST⟧}$ ... [$_{VP}$ NP$_{NOM}$ *l*-form$_{[+AGR]}$]] — past tense
b. [$_{IP}$ $by_{⟦COND⟧}$ ... [$_{VP}$ NP$_{NOM}$ *l*-form$_{[+AGR]}$]] — finite conditional
c. [$_{IP}$ $by_{⟦COND⟧}$ ... [$_{VP}$ PRO infinitive$_{[-AGR]}$]] — non-finite conditional

Polish, on the other hand, has the particle but nonetheless adheres to the "old" agreement pattern, which means that the particle must be equipped with agreement features. This is achieved by enclitic PERSON/NUMBER markers (known from the past tense: -*m*, -*ś*, etc.); see (5a) and (5b). Without them, the IP is unspecified for agreement; see (5c).

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[1] All examples are 1SG, with conditional auxiliaries underlined. **BCS** – Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, **Bul** – Bulgarian, **Bel** – Belarusian, **Cze** – Czech, **LSb** – Lower Sorbian, **Mac** – Macedonian, **Pol** – Polish, **Rus** – Russian, **Slk** – Slovak, **Sln** – Slovene, **Ukr** – Ukrainian, **USb** – Upper Sorbian.

[2] East Slavic *by* can be reduced to *b* (stylistic in **Rus**, subject to complementary distribution in **Bel** and **Ukr**).

[3] Panzer (1967: 39) and Xrakovskij (2009: 276) observe that several dialects of **BCS** use the particle *bi* throughout their conditional paradigm and claim that it developed from the "regular" auxiliary verb (*bih*, *bi*, etc.) through truncation or/and analogy. The latter processes are indeed likely to be starting points of the states in (ii) and (iii).

(5) **Pol**

    a.   [$_{IP}$ $Op_{⟦PST⟧}$+$m_{[+AGR]}$ … [$_{VP}$ NP_{NOM} *l*-participle$_{[-AGR]}$]]   past tense

    b.   [$_{IP}$ $by_{⟦COND⟧}$+$m_{[+AGR]}$ … [$_{VP}$ NP_{NOM} *l*-participle$_{[-AGR]}$]]   finite conditional

    c.   [$_{IP}$ $by_{⟦COND⟧}$ … [$_{VP}$ PRO infinitive/*no/to*-form$_{[-AGR]}$]]   non-finite conditional

Turning to **BCS**, **Bul**, **Cze**, **Slk**, and **USb**, one finds auxiliary verbs with PERSON/NUMBER agreement that only combine with *l*-participles. I claim that the exclusion of non-finites[4] in V^0 is due to the non-availability of a conditional particle, as agreement is generally specified; see (6a) and (6b), respectively:[5]

(6) **BCS Bul · Cze Slk USb**

    a.   [$_{IP}$ NP_{NOM} $Op_{⟦PST⟧}$ … [$_{AuxP}$ t'_{NP} PST.Aux$_{[+AGR]}$ [$_{VP}$ t_{NP} *l*-participle$_{[-AGR]}$]]]   past tense

    b.   [$_{IP}$ NP_{NOM} $Op_{⟦COND⟧}$ … [$_{AuxP}$ t'_{NP} COND.Aux$_{[+AGR]}$ [$_{VP}$ t_{NP} *l*-participle$_{[-AGR]}$]]]   conditional

Finally, **LSb**, **Mac**, and **Sln** seem to be at an intermediate stage between the states (i) and (iii). While their past tense is identical to (6a) – see (7a) –, their conditional differs in that it seems to contain the particle. But since there is no non-finite conditional in **LSb**, **Mac** (see fn. 4), and **Sln**, this form can only be a "pseudo-particle". I wish to argue that the conditional in these three languages has much the structure in (6b) with only one difference: the auxiliary *verb* is underspecified for PERSON/NUMBER. In (7b), this is implemented by positing non-overt agreement suffix (-$\varnothing_{[+AGR]}$) on the *verbal* root *by*-.

(7) **LSb · Mac Sln**

    a.   [$_{IP}$ NP_{NOM} $Op_{⟦PST⟧}$ … [$_{AuxP}$ t'_{NP} PST.Aux$_{[+AGR]}$ [$_{VP}$ t_{NP} *l*-participle$_{[-AGR]}$]]]   past tense

    b.   [$_{IP}$ NP_{NOM} $Op_{⟦COND⟧}$ … [$_{AuxP}$ t'_{NP} *by*-$\varnothing_{[+AGR]}$ [$_{VP}$ t_{NP} *l*-participle$_{[-AGR]}$]]]   conditional

The data and analysis point at language change in progress: **LSb**, **Mac**, and **Sln** seem to be in an early stage of developing towards the "Eastern" type – a morphosyntactic change based on phonological change (truncation, analogy), as is illustrated in spoken and dialectal **BCS** (see fn. 3). It seems likely that the underspecified auxiliary verb in Aux^0 will once turn into a particle in I^0. **Pol**, on the other hand, is already much of the "Eastern" type, but syntactically (re)builds old-type auxiliary verbs, which is presumably related to the peculiar phenomenon of "mobile inflection" in this language (see, a.o., Embick 1995).

References

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[4] The significance of **Bul** and **Mac** data is strongly limited due to the loss of infinitives in these languages.

[5] I take it that auxiliary verbs are not in IP but in a quasi-functional AuxP above VP. They are semantically empty and only add agreement features, thus reflecting the presence of the respective *Op* in I^0. Although the **Slk** auxiliary forms *by som*, *by si*, etc. resemble their relatives in **Pol**, they must be *one* lexical item each considering the non-availability of non-finite and impersonal conditionals in **Slk**. Presumably, they underwent simplification by analogy to the past tense (similar forms can be found in spoken varieties of **Cze**).