

From ‘Two’ to ‘Both’: Historical Changes in the Syntax and Meaning of *Oba* in Slavic

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Old Church Slavonic (henceforth OCS)¹ did not have a determiner with the meaning of ‘both’. *Oba*, the historical counterpart of the modern Slavic ‘both’, meant simply ‘two’. This is a novel observation and it gives rise to the question of how and why *oba* changed from ‘two’ to ‘both’ in the history of Slavic. In this paper we propose an account of the syntactic reanalysis of *oba* and the accompanying changes in its meaning.

I. Old Church Slavonic

The grammars of OCS (e.g., Huntley 1993, Lunt 2001) as well as dictionaries and glossaries consistently give the meaning of *oba* as ‘both’. This is probably so for two reasons: (i) *oba* does mean ‘both’ in the modern Slavic languages, and (ii) the meanings of ‘both’ and ‘two’ overlap, and they are difficult to distinguish in definite contexts that allow a distributive interpretation. Thus, whereas the contrast between *The two girls met each other* and **Both girls met each other* shows that *both* is necessarily distributive, predicates that are not obligatorily collective can mask the semantic distinction between *both* and *the two*, e.g. *The two girls sang* and *Both girls sang*.

The predominant view about the meaning of OCS *oba*, however, is incorrect, as there is plenty of evidence that *oba* could not have meant ‘both’. First, *oba* could be used to form complex numerals, as shown in (1)-(3) (all data from Codex Marianus – the four gospels in OCS; 11th century A.D.). The numeral 12 in OCS, for instance, was literally ‘two on ten’. Clearly, the only semantic contribution *oba* can have in such cases is its cardinality of 2. In that sense, it was no different than the other numerals from 1 to 9, e.g., *četyre* ‘4’ or *sedmь* ‘7’, which similarly participated in the formation of the complex numerals *četyre na desěte* ‘14’, literally ‘four on ten’ and *sedmь na desěte* ‘17’, literally ‘seven on ten’.

(1) i sědъ glasi **oba na desěte** . i gla imъ ašte kto xoščetъ
and having-sat said two on ten and said them if who wants
‘And having sat down, he said to the twelve. And he said to them: if anyone wants...’
(Mark 9:35)

(2) sijě **oba na desěte** posъla isъ. zapovědavъ imъ glě .
these two on ten sent Jesus having-ordered them saying...
‘These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions...’ (Matthew 10:5)

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¹ OCS is the oldest recorded Slavic language. Although it belongs to the South Slavic branch of the family, it is thought to be sufficiently similar to, and thus a good representative of, the common predecessor of all the Slavic languages (e.g., Lunt 2001: 1, Schenker 1995: 71, 185-186).

- (3) тѣгда ѡдѣ отѣ **оѡѡѡ** **ндсѣт** нарѣаemy ijuda iskariotъsky къ archiereomъ
then went of two on-ten called Judas Iscariot to chief-priests
 ‘Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests.’ (Matthew 26:14)

Second, *oba* could be used with collective predicates, as exemplified in (4), which is also an environment where *both* is prohibited.

- (4) i prilĕpitъ sĕ ženæ svoei .i bōdete **oba** въ рлѣтъ edinō.
and will-cling REFL wife self's and will-be two in body one
 ‘and he will cling to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’ (Matthew 19:5b)

cf. *English* And he will cling to his wife, and *both/the two will become one flesh.

Finally, *oba* could be the complement of a partitive preposition, as shown in (5)-(6). Again, this is not an environment where *both* is licensed.

- (5) ky отѣ **оѡѡѡ** сътвори voljō отѣчō?
which of two did will of-the-father
 ‘Which of the two did what his father wanted?’ (Matthew 21:31a)

cf. *English* Which of *both/the two (of them) did what his father wanted?

- (6) kogo хоŕčete отѣ **оѡѡѡ** отѣруŕtju вамъ?
who want of two release you
 ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you? (Barabbas or Jesus) (Matthew 27:17b)

cf. *English* Which of *both/the two (of them) do you want me to release to you?

The examples above show clearly that the OCS *oba* could not have meant ‘both’. It was a simple numeral ‘two’ restricted to definite contexts. The definiteness of the nominal phrase in OCS is not expressed with an overt article. Another numeral, *dъva*, also meaning ‘two’, was used in both definite and indefinite contexts. The table in (7) documents the use of *oba* and *dъva* in Codex Marianus.

- (7) The use of *oba* and *dъva* in Codex Marianus

		MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	TOTAL
<i>oba</i>	NUMERAL USE “the two/*both”	14	10	12	6*	41
	AMBIGUOUS USE “the two/both”	4	2	6	0	13
<i>dъva</i>	INDEFINITE USE “two”	31	20	32	15	97
	DEFINITE USE “the two”	1	1	0	1	3

The star in the first row under John indicates that there is one example of the use of *oba* where the English version uses the word ‘both’. The relevant passage is John 20:3-4: “So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. **Both** were running, but the other disciple outran

Peter and reached the tomb first.” However, the *oba* used in the OSC version cannot have the meaning of ‘both’, as it co-occurs with the collective adverbial ‘together’. This adverbial cannot co-occur with ‘both’, which furnishes further evidence that *oba* did not mean ‘both’:

- (8) Izide že petrъ i drugy učeníkъ . i iděašete kъ grobu . tečaašete že
went-out so Peter and other disciple . and went to tomb . ran and
oba vъ kupæ . i drugy učeníkъ teče skorěe petra . i pride přězde kъ grobu
two together and other disciple ran faster Peter and came first to tomb .
 ‘So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first.’

cf. *English* * (They) both ran together.

The table in (7) shows that overwhelmingly (in 41 out of 54 cases), *oba* was used in environments where it could not have meant ‘both’. In the remaining 13 cases its true meaning was masked, as these are sentences where both ‘both’ and ‘the two’ would be acceptable since it is impossible to exclude the distributive interpretation. Note however, that this ‘ambiguity’ is a property of definite cardinality expressions in general. Thus, for example, a sentence like ‘*The three girls sang*’ can mean either that the girls sang together or that they sang different songs. Therefore the ambiguous use does not stand in opposition to the numeral use. Both uses are compatible with assigning the meaning of definite ‘two’ to *oba*.

The table also shows that the other numeral, *dъva*, was used predominantly in indefinite nominal phrases. The definite use is limited to three sentences, two of which are the same sentence in two different gospels. These sentences are provided in (9) and (10) below.

- (9) oni že glašē emu ne imatъ sъde tьkmo pětъ xlěbъ i dъvě rybě (...)
they but said to-him not have here only five bread and two fish ...
dъvě² rybě vъzbrěvъ na nbo blgsvi .
two fish looking-up on heaven gave-thanks
 ‘They said to him, we have only five loaves of bread and two fish. (...) [taking the five loaves of bread and³] the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks...’

- (10) otbъvěšta imъ isъ . ne azъ li vasъ dva na desēte izbъraхъ .
answered them Jesus not I Q you two on ten chose
 ‘Jesus answered them: Have I not chosen you, the Twelve?’ (John 6:70)

The proposal that *oba* in OCS was a numeral predicts that its morpho-syntax within the nominal phrase would be the same as that of other numerals. This is indeed so: *oba* was unexceptional, in comparison to *dъva* ‘two’, and more generally to the other numerals from 1 to 4⁴. All of them inflected like adjectives, agreeing in number, gender and case with the head noun. However, the evidence from the inflectional paradigm is not sufficient in itself to rule out an analysis of *oba* as a strong determiner, whether quantificational or definite. For instance, the

² Matthew 14:19 and Mark 6:41 have *dъva* in this context; Luke 9:16 has *oba*.

³ Text missing in the OCS original.

⁴ The numerals 5-9 inflected like singular feminine nouns.

demonstrative *tv* ‘this’ had the same inflectional affixes in the dual as did *oba* and *dьva* (*oba* and *dьva* only had forms for the dual). On the other hand, when *oba* co-occurs with a demonstrative it follows it, supporting the view that it is a numeral.

II. The Modern Slavic languages

The situation with *oba* in the modern Slavic languages is markedly different. *Oba* is found in all the modern languages in the family except Bulgarian and some dialects of Macedonian, and in all the languages that have it, *oba* means ‘both’. In that function, *oba* unambiguously marks distributive readings, as exemplified in (11)-(13), with a representative language from the West, East, and South branch of the Slavic family.

- (11) **Obie** studentki skończyły rozwiązywać zadanie. Polish
both students finished to-solve assignment
 ‘Both students finished solving the problem.’ (each of them solved it separately)
- (12) **Obe** studentki končili rešat’ zadaču. Russian
both students finished to-solve assignment
- (13) **Obe** studentkinje su završile zadatak Serbian
both students are finished assignment

As a distributive marker, *oba* is no longer found in complex numerals in modern Slavic. This is shown in (14)-(16). The only possible numeral in this context is *dva*.

- (14) I usiadłszy, przywołał **dwunastu** i rzekł im... Polish
and having-sat-down called two-on-ten and said them
 ‘And having sat down, he called the twelve and said to them...’
- (15) I sev, on pozval **dvenadtsat’** i skazal im... Russian
and having-sat-down he called two-on-ten and said them
- (16) Seo je i pozvao **dvanaestoricu** i rekao im... Serbian
sat is and call two-on-ten and said them

In the modern languages, *oba* cannot be used with collective predicates, as exemplified in (17)-(19), or with collective adverbials, as shown in (20)-(22). Again, in this respect, modern *oba* differs from its OCS predecessor.

- (17) Dlatego opuści człowiek ojca swego i matkę swoją i Polish
because-of-that will-leave man father self’s and mother self’s and
 połączy się z żoną swoją, i będą **ci dwoje/*oboje** jednym ciałem
*will-join REFL with wife self’s and will-be these two/*both one body*
 ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’

- (18) Poetomu ostavit čelovek otša i mat' i Russian
because-of-that will-leave man fathe and mother and
 soedenitsa so svoej ženoi, i **dvoe/*oba** stanut odnoi plot'iu.
*will-join-REFL with self's wife and two /*both will-become one flesh*
- (19) Zato će čovek ostaviti oca svoga i majku svoju Serbian
because-of-that man will-leave father self's and mother self's
 i sjediniti se sa ženom svojom i biće njih **dvoje/*oboje** jedno telo
*and will-join REFL with wife self's and will-be these two /*both one body*
- (20) **Obie** kobiety przyszły (***razem**). Polish
*both women came (*together)*
 ‘*Both women came together.’
- (21) **Obe** ženshchiny prišli (***vmeste**). Russian
both women came together
- (22) **Obe** žene su došle (***zajedno**). Serbian
both women are came together

Lastly, just like ‘both’, *oba* cannot be a complement of a partitive preposition, as exemplified in (23)-(25). Again, recall that in this syntactic context OCS *oba* was acceptable.

- (23) Który z tych **dwóch/*obu** wypełnił wolę ojcowską? Polish
*which from these two /*both fulfilled will of-father*
 ‘Which of these two did what his father wanted?’
- (24) Kto iz etikh **dvoikh/*oboikh** sdelał to, čto khotel otets? Russian
*who from these two /*both did this what wanted father*
- (25) Koji od njih **dvojice/*obojice/*oba** je učinio šta je njegov otac želeo? Serbian
*which from these two /*both is fulfilled what is his father wanted.*

As the examples above show, in the languages that have preserved *oba*, it no longer functions as a simple numeral ‘two’. Instead, it is a distributive determiner corresponding to the English ‘both’. The question arises of how this historical change from a numeral to a distributive determiner came to be, and what factors contributed to it.

An additional question stems from the fact that in Bulgarian and certain dialects of Macedonian, *oba* was lost as a lexical item. The function of ‘both’ is fulfilled by the phrase ‘and the two’, its use is exemplified in (26).

- (26) I dvamata studenti rešiha zadačata. Bulgarian
And the-two students solved the-problem
 ‘Both students solved the problem.’ (each of them solved it separately)

A distributive-marking syntactic construction is a cross-linguistically available alternative for languages that do not have a lexicalized ‘both’, e.g., Greek, French, Turkish, and of course, OCS (where the definiteness is not expressed overtly). Moreover, it is available for any numeral, not just ‘two’. The exact syntactic structure used may differ from language to language, though a definite article and an additive particle, as in (26), are common elements.⁵ It is of interest to find out whether there is a reason behind the different history between the two groups of Slavic languages – Polish, Russian, Serbian and others vs. Bulgarian and dialects of Macedonian.

III. The Semantics and Syntax of ‘both’

Before we present our analysis of the historical change in the meaning and syntax of *oba*, let us review briefly the accounts of the semantic and syntactic function of *both* as they have been proposed for English.

An important early account can be found in Barwise & Copper (1981), who propose that *both* is a determiner (the term being used in its semantic sense, not to imply the syntax of the head of the nominal phrase) which means the same thing as ‘the two’. However, we already know just from looking at Slavic that ‘two two’ and ‘both’ are not equivalent. This is also indicated by the examples in (27) and (28), which have been used to criticize Barwise & Cooper’s account.

(27) *One of both children sneezed.

(28) One of the two children sneezed.

In response to the problem indicated in (27)-(28), Ladusaw (1982) proposed that *both* has a distributive component, which in turn makes it impossible inside partitives and incompatible with collective predicates, as shown in (29)-(30):

(29) *Both students are a happy couple

(30) The two students are a happy couple

This idea was further developed in Roberts (1987) and Landman (1989), who argued that *both* is equivalent to the distributive universal quantifier *each/every*, plus a cardinality presupposition of 2. Brisson (1998) does not analyze *both* as a quantifier, but rather as a modifier to nominal phrases that yields the semantics of a definite description. It is licensed in the presence of a distributive operator, and has the semantic function of a maximizer – it picks up the maximal individual denoted by (the rest of) the nominal phrase. As a maximizer, it has an ‘anti-weakening’ effect, i.e., it rules out the possibility of pragmatic weakening, which is observed in situations where the predicate does not have to be true of all individuals for the proposition to be judged true, e.g.,

⁵ We do not address the issue of how distributivity is derived compositionally from such a structure.

(31) Q: Have **your parents** (ever) been to Europe?
 A: Yes (, my mother has).

(32) Q: Have **both of your parents** been to Europe?
 A: #Yes (,my mother has).

With respect to the syntax of *both*, it has been analyzed as a (floating) quantifier by Sportiche (1988) and Schwartzchild (1996), i.e., as an adjunct to nominal phrases (DPs) which can be stranded behind after the DP moves, e.g., *The children have both seen the movie*. Another type of analysis treats *both* as an adjunct in the nominal and verbal domain, i.e., DP-adjunct or VP-adjunct (e.g., Dowty & Brodie 1984, Brisson 1998).

Lastly, it should be mentioned that, as many authors have pointed out (e.g., Stockwell, Schachter and Partee 1973; Edmondson 1978; Schwartzchild 1996; Brisson 1998), the word *both* in English has two functions: (i) a quantifier/modifier function, and (ii) a conjunction introduction (or conjunction-reduction marker) function, which yields strictly distributive reading (a=b). The latter use of ‘both’ is exemplified in (33)-(35).

(33) a. Adam both acts and directs
 b. Adam acts and Adam dances

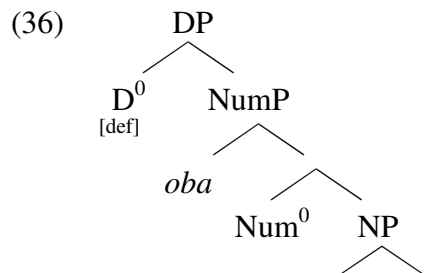
(34) a. The idea is both original and interesting.
 b. The idea is original and the idea is interesting

(35) a. Both Peter and Paul read the book
 b. Peter read the book and Paul read the book.

Putting this use of *both* aside, which Slavic *oba* does not have, we can conclude based on the proposals in the literature, that ‘both’ is a DP-adjunct, associated with (i) distributivity, (ii) cardinality of 2, and (iii) definiteness.

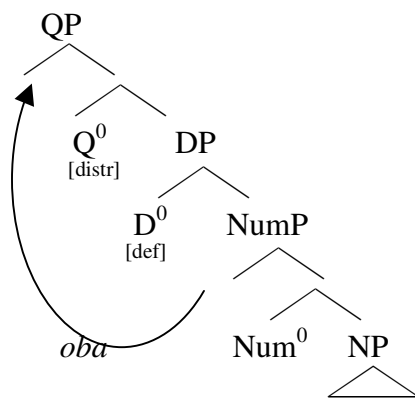
IV. Historical Changes in the Syntax and Semantics of *oba*

Coming back to Slavic, we can assume the structure as in (36) for OCS, where *oba* is a numeral with a definiteness presupposition, merging in the specifier of the Number Phrase. It lacks quantificational force of its own; it is simply a cardinality expression. The grammar of *dvva*, the other ‘two’, is the same, except for the fact that D⁰ can be specified [definite] or not.

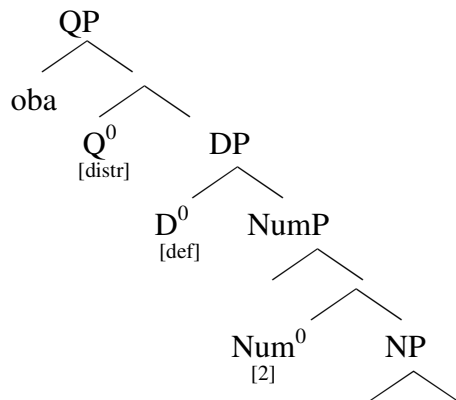


In Polish, Russian, Serbian and the other languages apart from Bulgarian and dialects of Macedonian, *oba* was reanalyzed from a numeral, a non-quantificational cardinality expression, to a Quantifier Phrase (QP), and it also acquired the meaning of distributivity. Syntactically, that meant that *oba* would move from the specifier of the Number Phrase, to a specifier of a QP, which in turn selects the definite DP. A null distributive operator in Q^0 is further posited. Notice that assuming a null distributive operator is justified, as distributive readings are possible without any overt marking. With the QP *oba* contributing the cardinality specification of 2, we get the distributive reading ‘each of the two.’ The syntactic reanalysis is represented in (37), with (38) showing the present-day situation.

(37) Historical change in the syntax of *oba*



(38) The modern grammar of *oba*



In (38) [*def*] D is null in all the modern languages, except for the dialects of Macedonian that have *oba*, where it is expressed with an overt definite article.

The fact that *oba* was promoted to a higher projection, freeing up the numeral position within the NumP, is evidenced in the fact that some modern Slavic languages allow the numeral *d̆bva* to co-occur with *oba*. Examples of that are given in (39)-(40) below. Examples like this suggest that modern *oba* is directly merged as a Spec, QP, rather than first being merged as a numeral in Spec, NumP. It agrees with a Num^0 specified for a cardinality of 2.

(39) **Obaj/obydwaj** chcieli zapłacić za bilet. Polish
both/both-two wanted to-pay for ticket
'Both (men) wanted to pay for the ticket.'

(40) **Oba/obadva** dečaka su želela da plate kartu. Serbian
both/both-two boys are wanted to pay ticket
'Both boys wanted to pay for the ticket.'

The position of demonstrative pronouns with respect to *oba* also indicates that *oba* is merged higher than the Number Phrase. As the examples in (41)-(43) show, *oba* must precede the demonstrative pronoun.

(41) a. **Obaj ci** chłopcy chcieli zapłacić za bilet. Polish
both these boys wanted to-pay for ticket

b. ***Ci obaj** chłopcy chcieli zapłacić za bilet.
these both boys wanted to-pay for ticket
'Both these boys wanted to pay for the ticket.'

(42) a. **Oba eti** mal'čika khoteli zaplatit' za bilet. Russian
both these boys wanted to-pay for ticket

b. ??**Eti oba** mal'čika khoteli zaplatit' za biliet.
These both boys wanted to-pay for ticket

(43) a. **Oba ta** dečaka su želela da plate kartu. Serbian
both these boys are wanted to pay ticket

b. ***Ta oba** dečaka su želela da plate kartu.
these both boys are wanted to pay ticket

This contrasts with the position of the numerals, which must follow the demonstrative pronoun:

(44) a. ***Dwaj ci** chłopcy chcieli zapłacić za bilet. Polish
two these boys wanted to-pay for ticket

b. **Ci dwaj** chłopcy chcieli zapłacić za bilet.
these two boys wanted to-pay for ticket
'These two boys wanted to pay for the ticket.'

(45) a. ***Dva ta** dečaka su želela da plate kartu. Serbian
two these boys are wanted to pay ticket

b. **Ta dva** dečaka su želela da plate kartu.
these two boys are wanted to pay ticket

The above examples show clearly that *oba* has undergone a change: the original numeral *oba*, which at first merged in the Number Phrase, was moved higher up. This change was syntactic, and it was accompanied by a semantic change into a distributive quantifier. Some aspects of the meaning of *oba* remained unchanged. More concretely, *oba* retained the cardinality value of the numeral, only that now that cardinality value modifies the distributive quantifier rather than plurality. *Oba* also remained within the extended nominal domain. This is evidenced by the fact that, unlike in English, the Slavic ‘both’ is not found in conjunction reduction constructions, as shown in (46)-(49).

- (46) a. Adam (***oba**) gra i reżyseruje. Polish
*Adam (*both) acts and directs*
 ‘Adam both acts and directs.’
- b. Ten pomysł jest (***oba**) oryginalny i interesujący.
*this idea is (*both) original and interesting*
 ‘This idea is both original and interesting.’
- c. (***Obaj**) Piotr i Paweł przeczytali tę książkę.
*(*both) Peter and Paul read this book*
 ‘Both Peter and Paul read this book.’
- (47) a. Adam (***oba**) akter, i režiser. Russian
*Adam (*both) actor and director*
- b. Eta mysl’ (***oba**) original’na i interesna.
*this idea (*both) original and interesting*
- c. (***Oba**) Petr i Pavel čitali etu knigu.
*(*both) Peter and Paul read this book*
- (48) a. Adam (***oba**) glumi i režira. Serbian
*Adam (*both) acts and directs*
- b. Ta ideja je (***oba**) originalna i interesantna.
*this idea is (*both) original and interesting*
- c. (***Oba**) Petar i Pavle čitaju tu knjigu.
*(*both) Peter and Paul read this book*

Instead of *oba*, the conjunction *i* ‘and’ is used to introduce conjunction reduction in Slavic. Examples of that are given in (49)-(51), while (52) shows that this construction was already available in OCS.

- (49) a. Adam **i** gra **i** reżyseruje. Polish
Adam and acts and directs
 ‘Adam both acts and directs.’

- b. Ten pomysł jest **i** oryginalny **i** interesujący.
this idea is and original and interesting
 ‘This idea is both original and interesting’
- c. **I** Piotr **i** Paweł przeczytali tę książkę.
and Peter and Paul read this book
 ‘Both Peter and Paul read this book.’
- (50) a. Adam **i** aktor, **i** reżyser. Russian
Adam and actor and director
- b. Eta myśl’ **i** oryginal’na **i** interesna
this idea and original and interesting
- c. **I** Petr, **i** Pavel chitali etu knigu.
And Peter and Paul read this book
- (51) a. Adam **i** glumi **i** režiira. Serbian
Adam and acts and directs
- b. Ta ideja je **i** originalna **i** interesantna.
this idea is and original and interesting
- c. **I** Petar **i** Pavle čitaju tu knjigu.
and Peter and Paul read this book
- (52) boite že sě pače . mogōščaago **i** dšō **i** tělo pogubiti vь Ge(enně) OCS
fear but REFL more being-able and soul and body kill in hell
 ‘Rather, be afraid of the one who can kill both soul and body in hell.’ (Matthew 10:28b)

V. The Motivation for the Changes

Oba had a marked status in the system of numerals in OCS. It had a counterpart, *dьva*, with the same meaning (cardinality of two), the difference being only that *oba* could be used in a subset of the syntactic environments in which *dьva* could be used (recall that although *dьva* occurred most often in indefinite DPs, it could also be found in definite DPs). Furthermore, *oba* was the only numeral with a definiteness requirement. All other numerals were like *dьva*, neutral with respect to (in)definiteness of the DP in which they appeared. Thus *oba* simultaneously stood apart in the system of numerals and was in competition with a numeral that was an unexceptional member of the system. As such, *oba* was a likely candidate for reanalysis or loss. Both of these developments occurred in the history of Slavic.

Oba was lost in Bulgarian and in the dialects of Macedonian in contact with Bulgarian and Greek. This path of development was likely due to the emergence of an alternative for

expressing the meaning of ‘both’, once a definite article was developed in these languages.⁶ With an overt article present, a definite DP could be marked unambiguously even with the numeral *dьva*, something which was not possible earlier, since the use of bare (article-less) *dьva* could not distinguish between definite and indefinite DPs. In other words, whereas previously *oba* was competing with a lexical item *dьva* for use in syntactic structures such as [definite]-specified DP as in (36), and it had the advantage of unambiguously signaling a definite DP, now it no longer had that advantage. Moreover, the strategy of marking the [definite] D⁰ head of the DP was a general strategy, as it could be used with any numeral, not just ‘two’. So, in the presence of a syntactic construction expressing exactly the same meaning, and with a much wider applicability (i.e., not restricted to duality), the lexical item *oba* was lost. This development may also have been reinforced through influence from Greek, which lacked a lexical item ‘both’ but had the syntactic means of expressing this meaning through the ‘and the n’ construction.

Oba was reanalyzed in the rest of Slavic languages. None of these languages have developed a definite article, so the outright loss of *oba* was precluded. *Oba* changed, however, to a distributive quantifier, apparently filling a need for such a marker. Thus, the marked status of *oba* in the grammar was resolved.

VI. Summary

The OCS numeral *oba* ‘two’ has been either reanalyzed or lost in all modern Slavic languages. In those languages where it has been preserved, it acquired a distributive quantifier function.

These findings are of importance for more than just the history of *oba* in Slavic. They show the primacy of grammar, in the structures it generates and the system of relationships it determines, over lexical items (*oba* was lost when the syntactic means of expressing its meaning became available). They also show that marked elements are susceptible to change (*oba* did not replace *dьva*, but rather, *dьva* replaced *oba* in its definite use, making *oba* redundant and therefore subject to reanalysis).

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⁶ We will assume here that the definite article was introduced before the reanalysis of *oba*. The completed development of the article is dated rather early, 12-13th C (Duridanov et al 1993, p. 555), whereas the OCS texts are from 11th C, so this is not an implausible assumption.

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