

## USE AND MEANING OF PRESENT TENSE IN BOSNIAN LANGUAGE

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**ABSTRACT:** Present tense is broadly used in Bosnian language because it has the capacity to express the whole specter of meanings, besides indicating the present as its basic meaning. In this study an effort was made to provide an answer to the question what is the role of present tense and what meanings are expressed by this tense in the texts of traditional Bosnian lyric poems – the sevdalinka. Around 350 poems have been included. It is evident that in sevdalinka poems the present tense is quite frequently used expressing various meanings.

**Keywords:** syntax of verb forms, present tense, indicative, relative present tense, modal present tense

### BO NAĞÇADA MD K ZAMANIN KULLANIMI VE ANLAMI

**ÖZ:** Şimdiki zaman, anlamları tümüyle ifade edebilme yeteneđi ve temel anlam kapsamında Őu anı açıkladıđından dolayı Boşnakçada yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, şimdiki zamanın rolünün ne olduđu ve geleneksel Boşnak şiir –sevdalinka-metinlerinde bu zaman ile ifade edilen anlamların ne olduđu cevaplanmaya çalışılmıştır. Yaklaşık 350 şiir çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. Sevdalinka şiirlerinde, birçok anlamı ifade etmek için şimdiki zamanın kullanıldıđı açıktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** fiil biçimlerinin sözdizimi, şimdiki zaman, bildirme, nispi şimdiki zaman, kipsel şimdiki zaman

### INTRODUCTION

Linguists mostly explain the present tense as a verb form basically indicating an action, condition and event taking place at the time of speaking (Jahi , Halilovi , & Pali , 2000)(Mareti , 1963)(Stanoj i & Popovi , 2008)(Bari , et al., 2005). The time of speaking is not one moment but may last shorter or longer, so it can be addressed with more than one time, resulting in a number of uses and meanings of the present tense. The present

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tense can be used in indicative, relative, and modal mood, as well as in gnomes. In many present-day grammar books (Bari , et al., 2005)(Jahi , Halilovi , & Pali , 2000)(Stanoj i & Popovi , 2008) the authors give similar or identical uses of the present tense. Authors of montenegrian and croatioan grammar books use the term absolute present instead of indicative.

### **The indicative present tense**

The indicative use of the present tense (the absolute use) is the fundamental use of the present tense, the one we recognize in the very definition. This means that the term present tense is an equivalent for the general term, only when this form serves its real tense use, that is in indicative mood. Indicative mood indicates an action, condition or event taking place at the time of speaking (and when they are spoken about, as well). It further indicates general scientific or other truths, actions, and permanent conditions. This use of the present tense entails the form of the verb to be used, so “only infinite forms of the verb can be used in the function of the present tense.” (Stanoj i , 2010: 359).

In sevdalinka poems which were included in this study, there are many examples for this use of the present tense. The classification is given on the basis of criteria established in more than one grammar books so as not to lose the basic idea of uses and classifications of indicative present tense.

- a) The indicative present tense expressing an action performed by someone, e.g.

*Iz kamena vatra s'jeva,  
a moj Ahmo pjesmu pjeva. (9)*

*Djevojka vi e s visoka brda...  
Ona doživa sultana Selima(58)*

*Koloigra nasred Sarajeva  
u tom kolu dvije mile seje (160)*

*Meho pla e, traži staru majku  
njega tješipod duvak nevjesta(189)*

*Karanfil se na put sprema i pjeva,  
a draga mu konja sedla i pla e  
Otud ide mlado mom e, tanko, visoko,  
konja jaše, sablju paše, ide po dragu. (159)*

Kraj mom eta doropase,  
poigravase, aman igrase,  
nogomkopa, vodu pije  
i prisluškuje (173)

Kraj pendžera Jusuf stari  
Kahvu sr e, ibuk žari  
Gleda šeher-grad(171)

Mujo kuje konja po mjesecu,  
Mujo kuje, a majka ga kune(215)

Mene majka njeguje i gleda  
za drugoga udati me ne da(194)

Tuj junaci seir ine  
a moj dragi konja igra  
a ja stojim te ga gledam (180)

- b) The indicative present tense indicating an action taking place at the time of speaking:

Akšam gledi, dan se gubi,  
moje sreće zaman gubi.  
Akšam gledi, mrak sesprema,  
a za mene banka nema.(15)

Bol boluje mlado mom e, Lejlo,  
bol boluje I tuguje.(30)

Bulbul mi poje  
zora mi rudi  
a moga dragog nema (37)

Dilber Dika bere cv'je e  
a za njom se paun še e(50)

ul se kruni, pa djevojku budi...  
Mlad meprosi, za stara me daju(53)

Soko vatrugasi, krila mu se pale,

sokoli i pište a soko proklinje  
ljuto kune soko ljepotu djevojku (57)

Dvore gradi Komadina Mujo,  
sred Mostara, najljepšega grada.  
Rukettraže topla milovanja  
liceželi nježna njegovanja  
Srcettrži ista drugovanja  
usne traže pusta sevdisanja(72)

Moja draga i ne haje za me  
niti haje, niti eka na me (86)

Sve djevojke u koluigraju  
A za moju nevolju ne znaju.(112)

Otuide mlado mom e, tanko, visoko,  
konja jaše, sablju paše, ide po dragu. (159)

c) Permanent conditions stated at the time of speaking:

Akšam gledi, dan se gubi,  
moje srce zman gubi.  
Akšam gledi, mrak se sprema ,  
a za mene sanku nema.(15)  
Bulbul mi poje  
zora mi rudi  
a moga dragog nema (37)

d) The indicative present tense indicating a general scientific, artistic or other truth:

Bosno moja, divna, mila  
Lijepa, gizdava,  
U tebi je Sarajevo  
Šeher sevdaha  
U tebi je Banja Luka  
Uzdah momaka(34)

Blago suncu i mjesecu  
Jer se sunce jutromra a  
A i mjesec esto mladi (29)

*Pod ku om ti Drina voda te e  
Viš' ku e ti badem drvo raste(109)  
Istom zora sa istoka rudi(217)*

### **Relative present tense**

In its relative use the present relative tense indicates actions which are simultaneous with past or future actions (Piper i dr., 2005, p. 365). In this use, unlike the indicative mood, both finite and infinite verbs are at work.

When a relative past action is indicated with the present tense, then its syntactic function is identical to the function of the present time. Narrative or historical present tense indicates actions pertinent to a certain point in the past. There is a consistent pattern in this form of relative use of the present tense. "This pattern can be most appropriately defined as following: by the form of the present tense relatively past actions are indicated an only in dependent compound clauses, where a preterite verb form is in the independent clause, while the present tense is in the dependent clause." (Piper i dr, 2005: 365).

The relative present tense can indicate recurrent actions "when conditions are right for these to take place," (Stanoj i , 2010: 360), though actions taking place by a natural sequence, custom or habit belong to this present, as well. This kind of use is known as qualifying use.

In sevdalinka poems which were subject of this study, there are numerous examples of this form of the present tense, which conforms with the claim of M. Stevanovic that "folk poems particularly abound in this kind of the present tense.(Stevanovi , 1979: 585)."

- a) Narrative (historical) present tense in the following examples points to the frequency of its use:

*Hotijah joj nešto govoriti  
Al joj babo na ardaku sjedi(81)*

*Sazrelo vo e, dragi me ho e  
majka me ne da, ja joj pobjegla.(47)*

*Danju-no u, no u-danju  
zbog ljubavi patim ja  
a u zoru, a u zoru  
gorke su lijem ja.  
Danju-no u, no u-danju*

u kafani sedim ja  
a u zoru, a u zoru  
tužan ku i odem sam.(49)

U Mejre se ništa ne vi aše  
sam se vide sitne pletenice (88)

Ona rodi devet djevojaka  
I desetu nosi pod pojasom.  
Beg Ali-Beg kre e u aršiju  
Svojoj ljubi tiho progovara(109)

Kad su došli Tankosi a dvoru  
Vode svate u tople odaje(135)

Kad ujutru bijeli dan osvanu  
Mom e spava ni glavu ne diže  
A djevojka sitan vezak veze (219)

Kad tiideš u mejhanu  
Mene vežeš red mejhanu,  
Grizem tavu iz korjena,  
Pjemvodu sa kemena,  
To je meni dojadilo(10)

Ja prošetah šefteli sokkakom  
Sve djevojke beru šeftelije(111)

Kvalifikativni prezent  
Akšam do e, jacija se sprema,  
a u ku i kapi vode nema (14)

Imam dragog al, je na daleko  
dokle do e, pola no i pro e  
dok probudi pjevci zapjevaju  
dok poljubi, sabah-zora do e(41)

Do pono i pije, lije  
Od pono i ku i ide(182)

Drage nema a sve mislim na nju

*I kunem je i no u i danju (86)*

### **The present tense for the future**

In everyday speech, but also in these poems, the form of the present tense is used for actions that haven't taken place yet, rather, it refers to time after the time of speaking, that is the future. This is the present tense for the future. Authors of Montenegrin and Croatian grammar books classify modal present tense as a present tense for future, but linguists like Stanojčić, Klajn and Stevanović differentiate between these constructions.

This present tense is characterized by a more frequent use of imperfective verbs, but with the meaning of future imperfective verbs, and this tense is usually "marked by an adverbial, adverb of time, language context in general." (Stevanović, 1979: 588).

- a) The following examples illustrate the function of the present tense for the future:

*Bajram ide, Bajramu se nadam.(22)*

*Danas sam ovdje, draga, sutra  
Odlazim (83)*

*Pri ekaj me još sutra do podne  
Dok ja do em mutna i krvava (69)*

*Kad tvoju djecu u mejtef dadneš  
Kad svojoj deci srežeš haljine (94)  
Kad je po em u Stambol u aršiju (123)*

Perfective verbs can be used for the present tense for the future and it "can indicate a future action" (Klajn, 2010: 121) like in the following example:

*Kad moj dragi legnespati  
Karanfil e mirisati (142)*

### **Modal present tense**

Along with the time use, the present tense can be used to express attitude of the speaker towards an action that didn't take place. This kind of present tense, as well as the construction itself, has a broad use in language (Stevanović, Stanojčić i Piper cite a myriad of examples), though, most

commonly, it is used to indicate an intended action likely to take place, but with a condition attached.

“There is a special use of present as a complement to modal verbs ...“ (Stanoj i , 2010: 362). The construction if + the present tense is used as a complement (with modal verbs) to verbs expressing wish, intention, as a complement to impersonal verbs, expressing a condition or future tense.

- a) Modal present tense expressing an intended action:

*Ako Bog da pa **da je dovedemo**(163)*

- b) when speaker is fairly sure that action will take place

*Draga dragog **doziva bez daha**  
„aman, lu e, **mrijem** od sevdaha“(97)*

- c) construction if + the present tense as a complement to verbs:

*Kupi mi , dragi, crnu šamiju  
Oh dragi,  
Crno da **nosim**, tebe da **žalim**(83)*

*A kad svane i sunce ograne  
Morat u se s tobom **da ristanem** (42)*

### Summary

The use of the present tense in sevdalinka poems is, not surprisingly, very frequent, because the present tense is a simple verb form with a rich expressive and stylistic capacity; it is used to indicate events pertaining to the present, making that present actual to the reader.

The present is of relative duration, so the duration of action extends both to the future and the past, which makes it convenient for literature, which aspires to be universal.

The present tense most frequently used in sevdalinka poems in the indicative present tense and it is very common that it is the only one to be used. Actions indicated are mostly taking place at the same time, which adds to the affection and persuasiveness on the part of the author, and to the receptiveness on the part of the reader. Frequency in use of this verb form is „due to the emotional attitude of the author towards the time in which an action takes place, in an effort to express time in as a vivid way as possible“ ( orac: 64).

A number of examples of qualifying present tense has been noticed in



this study, noticeably in description of scenery, while the indicative describing actions due to someone's skills, is used in describing characters. Stylistic function of the present tense invokes deeper connotations and the relation of sevdalinka poems towards natural phenomena or traits of the character.

Further, the relative present tense, which is harder to identify, is also broadly used because of the nature of literal form. The relative indicating past is mostly used with perfect or aorist, while the relative for future is commonly used with future tense. Modal present tense commonly takes the form *if + the present tense* when thoughts, intentions or wishes of the character are described, adding to its the expressive value.

In the sevdalinka poems included in this study no example for gnome present tense was found, though it is fair to presume that it can be found in some.

### **Rezime (Summary in bosnian)**

Upotreba prezenta u sevdalinkama je, o ekvivalentno, veoma frekventna, jer prezent prost glagolski oblik, koji poseduje bogatu ekspresivnu i stilisticku vrijednost; njime se opisuju dogadjaji koji pripadaju sadržajnosti, te je ta sadašnjost u poetskom iskazu aktualizirana u trenutku percepcije stihova.

Sadašnjost je relativnog trajanja, pa se i trajanje radnje prostire i u budućnost i u prošlost, što prezentu daje široku primjenu u književnim djelima, jer pjesnički iskaz nužno stremlji ka univerzalnosti.

Najčešće upotrijebljen prezent u sevdalinkama je indikativni prezent i veoma je esto da u pjesmi bude samo on upotrijebljen. Radnje koje se opisuju su uglavnom naporedne, što doprinosi afektivnosti umjetničkog iskaza, te njegovoj uvjerljivosti i prijemivosti za čitaoca. Frekventna upotreba ovog glagolskog oblika jeste „posljedica afektivnog stava govornika prema vremenu u kojemu se radnja vrši, iz poticaja da se ekspresivnije izrazi vrijeme“ (Orac: 64).

U istraživanju je uočeno nekoliko primjera kvalifikativnog prezenta, u deskripciji pejzaža, dok se indikativ, kojim se opisuju radnje koje neko zna ili umije da vrši, upotrebljava kod opisa likova. Stilogena funkcija upotrebe prezenta tako ukazuje na dublje konotacije i odnos sevdalinke prema prirodnim fenomenima ili osobinama junaka.

Također, ista je upotreba relativnog prezenta, kojeg je teže

prepoznati, zbog prirode same književne vrste. Relativ za iskazivanje prošlosti uglavnom se nalazi zajedno sam krnjim perfektom ili aoristom, dok je relativ za budućnost najčešće upotrijebljen sa futurom I. Modalni prezent je isto iskazan konstrukcijom *da+ prezent* - kada se opisuju misli, htijenja ili želje junaka, te je i ovdje došla do izražaja ekspresivna vrijednost ove funkcije prezenta..

U korpusu sevdalinki odabranih za ovo istraživanje, nije pronađen primjer za gnomski prezent, mada je nesumnjivo da u nekim stihovima drugih sevdalinki mogu biti i gnomi.

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**Source (sample surveys)**

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