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Fundamentals and Advances in Balkan Linguistics

edited by

Gjorgje Bozhoviq and Aleksandar Trifunović

Introduction Fundamentals and Advances in Balkan Linguistics

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The present issue of *Balcania et Slavia* consists of a selection of papers based on the presentations given at the first international meeting of *Fundamentals and Advances in Balkan Linguistics* (FABL), held at the University of Belgrade on November 16–18, 2023.

By organising FABL, we wanted to create a forum for the current high-quality work in Balkan linguistics, especially the one that deals with less widely researched varieties, topics or innovative methodologies, as well as to foster networking between researchers from various academic centres around the world where this work is currently being done. To the best of our knowledge, there was no other similar international event, devoted specifically to Balkan linguistics, and we felt the need for such venue. The turnout of the conference proved that our intuitions were sound.

A total of 44 papers were presented at FABL, including six plenaries. Out of the latter, three invited talks, presenting some of the cutting-edge research on language contacts with an interdisciplinary or otherwise methodologically innovative dimension, were delivered by Ana Stulic (Bordeaux-Montaigne) on the sociolinguistics of Judeo-Spanish in the Balkans, Lumnije Jusufi (HU Berlin) on Albanian-Slavic dialect contacts in western Macedonian border zones, and Adina Dragomirescu (Bucharest) on how a formal approach to diachronic



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(micro)variation can shed novel light on the effects of language contact in syntax, focusing on Romanian-Slavic contacts in the syntax of Old Romanian and Istro-Romanian.

In addition, three remaining plenary talks were delivered by distinguished scholars in the field, who also served as members of the FABL Scientific Advisory Board. Professor Irena Sawicka (Warsaw) opened the conference with a talk on multiple sources of selected phonetic and morphosyntactic balkanisms. On the second day, academician Marjan Markovikj (Skopje) delivered a talk on Macedonian-Aromanian interferences in the prepositional system, focusing particularly on instances of double prepositions. The conference concluded with a joint plenary talk by Evangelia Adamou (Paris) and Andrey N. Sobolev (St. Petersburg), who presented the multinational collaborative project on creating a new up-to-date *Atlas of the Balkan Linguistic Area*, produced by a team of 24 co-authors from 13 institutions across nine European countries.

In addition to lectures, as a special plenary event FABL has also hosted the promotion of the most recent publications on Balkan Romance and Romani anthropological and contact linguistics, (co-)edited and (co-)authored by researchers from the Institute for Balkan Studies of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, viz. Annemarie Sorescu-Marinković, Svetlana Ćirković, and Mirjana Mirić.

The remaining talks, in total 38 of them, were presented in eleven parallel sessions on various aspects of Balkan linguistics, bringing together 55 authors and co-authors, affiliated with 32 different institutions in 18 countries, from USA to Japan. Five of those, included in this volume of *Balcania et Slavia*, truly showcase the span and the main topics of the conference. Some of them take a wider contrastive or comparative approach, while others focus on very specific local contact situations. All levels of linguistic structure and analysis are represented—phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse, and the lexicon. The languages analysed include all major members of the Balkan sprachbund and beyond, viz. South Slavic varieties – both Balkan Slavic and the non-balkanised western South Slavic dialects – Albanian, Modern Greek, and Balkan Romance.

In their collaborative paper, entitled *The Discursive Functions of zar-Questions in Macedonian and Serbian*, Eleni Bužarovska from the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University and Liljana Mitkovska, both from Skopje, present the results of their research on questions marked by particles *zar* or *zare* in Macedonian and *zar* in Serbian. The authors argue that the element *zar* functions as a modal operator, serving to amplify the assertiveness of a presuppositional question it introduces, simultaneously altering the polarity of the encoded proposition. Consequently, *zar*-questions convey a negative bias, rendering them most suitable for contexts involving contradiction. In order to determine the functional distribution of *zar*-questions in Macedonian and

Serbian and to assess the extent of their convergent development, the analysis was based on over 400 examples extracted from literary prose in both languages. It has revealed notable similarities between the two languages, whereby *zar*-questions appear to serve three primary functions: that of rhetorical, assertive, and biased questions. Rhetorical questions, which are prevalent in both language samples, generate a strong epistemic conflict, resulting in emphatic effects. Assertive questions emphasise specific aspects of the epistemic conflict, heightening their assertiveness, while in biased *zar*-questions, assertiveness turns out to be lowest. A specific value of this paper lies in the fact that it is one of the rare analytical contributions to Balkan pragmatics.

In the paper on *Agreement, Case and Definiteness in Balkan Existential Constructions*, Alberto Frasson from the University of Wrocław presents a minimalist syntactic account of the so-called definiteness effects in existential constructions, focusing on the Albanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Modern Greek, and Serbian counterparts of English *there*-constructions. Despite the superficial differences, the paper argues for a unified syntactic analysis for the constructions in question, i.e. for a single Balkan existential construction. It focuses on structures with a 3sg neuter *have*-copula and a post-copular NP (the pivot), which show some degree of variation among the Balkan languages in case marking on the pivot. Thus, while Albanian and Greek use indefinite accusative pivots in this construction, Bulgarian and Macedonian have indefinite pivots, and Serbian uses genitive-marked pivots. All three strategies, however, follow from the presentative nature of such existential constructions, which generally disallow definite post-copular pivots (with genitive objects in Serbian encoding indefiniteness), and the paper further argues that the non-nominative pivots cannot be the grammatical subject of the construction. Rather, a 3sg null expletive with valued ϕ -features and an unvalued case feature, functioning like *pro*, is a target for agreement operations, thus blocking agreement with the pivot. The *have*-copula, encoding specific interpretative features associated with presentativity, allows for non-nominative case assignment in Albanian, Greek, and Serbian in view of its argument structure, so that the pivot is actually the object, which explains accusative case assignment in Albanian and Greek. In addition to providing a unified approach to definiteness effects in these Balkan existentials, this paper demonstrates the methodological and explanatory potential of a formal approach to traditional balkanisms, such as *have*-existentials, and to (micro)variation in Balkan linguistics.

Niyaz Kireyev from the École normale supérieure of the Université Paris Sciences et Lettres, in the paper entitled *Балканские проклитики и история славянского союза или [Balkan Proclitics and the History of the Slavic Conjunction ili 'or']*, deals with the

accentual history of the Slavic conjunction *ili* 'or', in particular in the light of its South Slavic reflexes, where this conjunction is best attested. The paper argues that, contrary to earlier claims, the word originally had final accent, at least in South Slavic, as evidenced by the exclusively attested Middle Bulgarian form *ilī*, but later it became proclitic, whence the initially stressed forms such as Modern Bulgarian *ili* and BCMS *īli*. This reanalysis allows the author to propose an alternative etymology for the conjunction *ili*, whereby it represents a compound made of *i* 'and' and the historical conjunction *li* 'or' (rather than *i* + question particle *li*, which is standardly assumed). As a compound of a proclitic and an enclitic, *ili* is regularly oxitonic, but due to its further grammaticalisation and procliticisation, it surfaces with an initial falling tone in BCMS, as do some other disyllabic proclitics, like the prepositions *među* and *protiv*. While tackling the issues of Slavic historical accentology, especially those transcending the traditional eastern vs. western South Slavic and balkanised vs. non-balkanised divide, this paper also stresses out the importance of integrating the data from the South Slavic continuum as a whole.

Kenta Sugai from the Hokkaido University in Sapporo, in the paper entitled *The Integration of Romanian Loan Verbs in the Bulgarian Dialect of Brănești*, explores the borrowing of verbs in the Bulgarian dialect of Brănești in Romania, while aiming to investigate how bilingual speakers integrate Romanian loan verbs in their Bulgarian vernacular. The research is based on the data collected during the author's own fieldwork in the village. It is argued that the bilingual speakers of Brănești Bulgarian may choose either a direct or indirect loan verb insertion strategy, and in the latter case, they utilise the suffix *-askā*, borrowed from Romanian, which was extended and generalised as a loan verb integration marker. This process is motivated by formal similarities between the Romanian inflectional suffix *-ă* and the thematic vowel of Bulgarian verbs, as well as between *-askā* and the Bulgarian suffix *-ka*. An additional factor allowing for this generalisation may be the high productivity of both the verbal suffix *-esc* in Romanian and the suffix *-ka* in Bulgarian. These are ultimately the reasons why the bilingual speakers choose to extend and generalise *-askā* as a morphological integration marker of Romanian loan verbs with suffixes in general. A particular contribution of this paper to the existing body of research on Romanian loan verb integration in the Bulgarian dialect of Romania lies in combining the original fieldwork data with both quantitative and contrastive analysis, which has not been undertaken before.

Aleksandar Trifunović from the University of Ljubljana, in the paper entitled *The Role of the Particle po- in the Comparison of Adjectives in Shtokavian Dialects*, tracks the areal distribution of this particle across Shtokavian dialects, trying to establish a border between the dialects that have the particle *po* and those in which this particle

is not present. The particle *po* is characteristic of almost all Slavic languages, including the evidence that it used to exist in Slovene in the earlier stages of its development, as well, although the modern standard language lacks it. That leads to the conclusion that Proto-Slavic had it, too. However, while in most other Slavic languages, the particle *po* has a uniform meaning within the given language, Shtokavian dialects display a whole spectrum of its meanings and usage. In some dialects, it is used only with the positive degree, in others with both positive and comparative degrees, while in some, it can be used with adjectives in all three degrees of comparison, bearing the meanings from “less than” to “pretty much” in some dialects, to “more than” or “quite” in others, while in some dialects, the particle *po* is grammaticalised as the only way of forming the comparative degree of adjectives, a trait traditionally described as a balkanism. The paper also briefly touches on the chronology of the switch from synthetic to analytic type of comparison in the Torlak dialects, associating it with the same shift that Macedonian and Bulgarian underwent.

We wish to thank the reviewers for both the conference abstracts and the papers in this volume, for sharing their expertise, as well as the editors of *Balcania et Slavia* for hosting the papers and Edizio-ni Ca’ Foscari for supporting the publication. We extend our special gratitude to Jasmina Moskovljević Popović, Andrey N. Sobolev, and Giuseppina Turano, for their support and guidance. It is our hope that FABL will become a traditional gathering of Balkan linguists, with the next event anticipated to take place in 2025.

Agreement, Case and Definiteness in Balkan Existential Constructions

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Abstract This paper discusses agreement and definiteness effects in existential constructions in Balkan existential constructions. I build on the restriction on definiteness properties of existential pivots known as definiteness effect: post-copular pivots in existentials have to be indefinite. In Balkan languages, the contrast is also signaled by the use of a dedicated copula exhibiting singular neuter agreement. I argue that existential pivots are interpreted as semantic objects, as evidenced by the assignment of non-nominative case. I propose that existential copulas take two nominals: the post-copular pivot and a pre-copular null expletive, which behaves as the subject of the construction.

Keywords Agreement. Case. Definiteness. Expletives. Existentials. Syntax.

Summary 1. Introduction. – 2. Existential and Locative Constructions. – 3. Data. – 3.1 Other Properties of Existentials. – 3.2 Summary. – 4. Towards an Analysis: The Interpretation of Existentials. – 5 the Syntax of Existential Constructions. – 5.1 Neuter Agreement and Expletive *pro*. – 5.2 Genitive Case Assignment in Serbian. – 5.3 A Note on the Have Copula. – 5. Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

This paper presents a minimalist syntactic account of agreement and definiteness effects in existential constructions, focusing on Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian and Serbian counterparts of English there-constructions. Despite the superficial differences, I argue for a unified syntactic analysis for these constructions in Balkan languages. The study eventually aims at defining the type of construction exhibited by the languages under analysis as a generalized Balkan¹ existential pattern.

The study builds on a well-known contrast between locative and existential constructions in English; starting from Milsark (1974), literature has revealed a cross-linguistic restriction on definiteness properties of existential pivots: the *definiteness effect* predicts that post-copular pivots in existential constructions have to be indefinite. This effect extends to Balkan languages, where the contrast between locative and existential constructions is also signaled using a dedicated *have* copula, which exhibits singular neuter² agreement.

In line with previous formal approaches to Balkan languages (Turano 2021; Kampanarou 2023; Frasson, Vaikšnoraitė forthcoming), I argue that existential pivots are interpreted as ‘semantic objects’, as evidenced by the assignment of accusative (in Albanian and Greek) or genitive (in Serbian) to post-copular pivots. I propose that existential copulas take two nominals: the post-copular pivot and a pre-copular null expletive, which behaves as the grammatical subject of the construction.

Hence, the indefinite pivot is assigned structural accusative case by the copula in Albanian and Greek, as nominative is already assigned to the null expletive subject. Bulgarian and Macedonian do not morphologically mark case on the pivot, which however needs to be indefinite. I argue that such restriction on definiteness is responsible for genitive assignment to Serbian existential pivots: following Kagan (2009; 2012), I assume that genitive is particularly likely to appear on indefinite arguments as it expresses lack of existential commitment.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 discusses the contrast between locative and existential constructions; Section 3 presents the Balkan data, focusing on formal and interpretive differences

¹ I refer to Balkan languages as to the languages spoken in the Balkan peninsula, rather than just those belonging to the Balkan Sprachbund.

² The data show that neuter gender is not marked on all copulas, but only in particular forms used in past tenses. Given that existential agreement is analyzed here as a regular instance of subject-verb agreement, I propose that the lack of gender marking on present tense copulas follows from a more general configuration of the verbal system in the languages under analysis, whereby the gender of the subject is normally not realized on finite verbs, but only on (some) non-finite verbs.

between locative and existential constructions in Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian and Serbian. In Section 4, I show that the difference between locative and existential constructions is reflected in their interpretation as predicative orthetic constructions; in addition, I propose that existential pivots do not exhibit subject properties. Building on this notion, in Section 5 I present a syntactic analysis of locative and existential constructions, discussing agreement, case assignment and interpretive properties of the copula. Section 6 concludes the paper.

2 Existential and Locative Constructions

This paper analyzes the opposition between locative and existential copular constructions from the perspective of Balkan languages. The difference between locative and existential constructions has received wide attention in the generative syntactic tradition, since Milsark (1974), who studied the contrast between existential *there*-constructions (1a) and locative structures (1b) in English.

(1) English

- a. There are cats here.
- b. The cats are here.

Locative constructions (1b) can be assimilated to regular predicative constructions, with a definite nominal functioning as a subject of predication. The components of an existential construction require the introduction of some additional concepts. Existential constructions like the one in (1a) exhibit special morphosyntactic properties that set them apart from locatives; they are made up of a pivot, a copula, a coda and an expletive subject.

The *pivot* is a noun phrase denoting an entity whose existence is presented in the sentence. Cross-linguistically, pivots tend to be realized as indefinite nouns. The restriction on the realization of definite pivots is known in the literature as *Definiteness Effect* (Milsark 1974):

Definiteness effect (Milsark 1974)

The post-verbal noun phrase of existential *there*-clauses in English must be indefinite.

This effect seems to hold quite generally cross-linguistically, as Balkan languages will confirm.

The second component of an existential construction is the *coda*, representing the portion of an existential construction where the spatial or temporal coordinates in which the existence of the pivot is

assumed; the coda provides a domain in which the pivot can be interpreted. For the present discussion, I assume that the coda is represented in syntax as a VP adjunct (McNally 1992).

The *copula* is generally (though not universally) represented as a verb predicating the existence of the pivot.

Finally, the *expletive* is intended as a dummy form which lacks referential properties, whose role is assumed to be that of a filler of the subject position if, for independent reasons, the subject cannot be null.

Most relevantly for the present discussion, not all elements discussed above need to be present in an existential construction. Francez (2007) showed that only the pivot is cross-linguistically universally obligatory in existential constructions. Codas are always available, but never obligatory. Copulas are always optional and there is cross-linguistic variation in their realization. Expletives are generally obligatory, if available in the system.

The literature on existential constructions is extensive and discusses the nature of such constructions in a variety of languages. Cross-linguistic studies (Bentley et al. 2015; Francez 2007; McCloskey 2014; McNally 2011; Moro 1997; Sarda, Lena 2023) revealed that both existential and locative constructions express the existence or the presence of someone or something in a context (McNally 2011). However, existential constructions may exhibit a cluster of formal properties that set them apart from locative constructions. Consider the French examples in (2a) and (2b):

(2) French

- a. Il y a des chats ici.
EXPL.3SG.NOM LOC have.PRS.3SG IND cat.PL.PART here
‘There are cats here.’
- b. Les chats sont ici.
the.DEF.PL cat.PL.NOM be.PRS.3PL here
‘The cats are here.’

The existential sentence in (2a) uses the expletive pronoun *il*, the *have* copula *y a*, the indefinite pivot *des chats* and the locative coda *ici*. In (2b), the locative construction exhibits a preverbal definite nominal and uses a *be* copula.

There are even more fine-grained differences between the structures presented in (2a) and (2b). First, the use of a *be* copula in the locative in (2b), which contrasts with the use of a *have* copula in the existential construction (2a). Besides, the *be* copula in (2b) exhibits full person and number agreement with the preverbal plural DP *les chats*. The *have* copula in (2a) does not agree with the post-copular pivot: the copula is marked for third person singular whereas the

pivot is marked for plural. The *have* copula in (2a) agrees with the preverbal dummy subject *il*, a masculine singular form. Third, the post-copular pivot in (2a) is preceded by the preposition *des*, used in French as a partitive marker. In Section 3, I show that parallel contrasts between existential and locative constructions can be found across Balkan languages too.

3 Data

Balkan languages exhibit a high degree of variation in the rendition of English and French existential constructions (see Sobolev 1997 on Balkan Slavic). Nevertheless, locative and existential constructions can be clearly identified based on a number of formal properties, similarly to what was shown in Section 2. In the present study, I focus on standard³ varieties of Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian and Serbian, where a contrast emerges between locative sentences and existential structures exhibiting default third singular neuter agreement on a *have* copula. I identify three patterns in the realization of existential constructions: the Bulgarian-Macedonian one, the Albanian-Greek one and the Serbian one. In the remainder of this section, I present them separately.

The first pattern is represented by Bulgarian⁴ and Macedonian, which alternate different copulas and definite or indefinite forms of the nominal in the construction.

(3) Bulgarian

- a. Tuk ima kotk-i.
here have.PRS.3SG cat-PL
'There are cats here.'
- b. Kotk-i-te sa tuk.
cat-PL-DEF be.PRS.3PL here
'The cats are here.'

³ For the purposes of the present study, I focus on standard varieties of the languages under analysis. I leave the discussion of dialectal variation in the use of existential and locative constructions in Balkan languages for future research.

⁴ An anonymous reviewer pointed out that Bulgarian allows for existential constructions with definite pivots and doubling accusative clitics:

- (i) Ima gi dārveta-ta (...).
have.PRS.3SG them.ACC.3PL tree-PL-DEF
'There are the trees (...).'

I leave the discussion of the role of the definite article in such examples for future research. The presence of an accusative clitic in (i) can support the analysis of case assignment presented in the following sections.

(4) Macedonian

- a. Tuka ima mačk-i.
here have.PRS.3SG cat-PL
'There are cats here.'
- b. Mačk-i-te se tuka.
cat-PL-DEF be.PRS.3PL here
'The cats are here.'

In both languages, existential constructions (3-4a) exhibit a *have* copula in the third person singular followed by an indefinite pivot. Conversely, locative constructions (3-4b) exhibit a pre-copular definite nominal, followed by a fully agreeing *be* copula.

Albanian and Greek present a similar, but slightly more complex pattern: just like Bulgarian and Macedonian, existential constructions use a third person singular *have* copula and a post-copular indefinite pivot (5-6a), while locative constructions use a pre-copular definite nominal and a *be* copula (5-6b).

(5) Albanian

- a. Ka mac-e këtu.
have.PRS.3SG cat-PL.ACC here
'There are cats here.'
- b. Mac-e-t janë këtu.
cat-PL.NOM-DEF be.PRS.3PL here
'The cats are here.'

(6) Greek (Kampanarou, 2023)

- a. Échei kafé sto ntoulápi.
have.PRS.3SG coffee.SG.ACC in cupboard.
'There is coffee in the cupboard.'
- b. O kafé-s éinai sto ntoulápi.
the.DEF.PL coffee-SG.NOM be.PRS.3SG in cupboard.
'The coffee is in the cupboard.'

Unlike Bulgarian and Macedonian, Albanian and Greek existential constructions reveal another important property: the post-copular indefinite pivots in (5a) and (6a) are assigned accusative case. I will assume that this holds both for Greek, where accusative is sometimes morphologically distinct from nominative, and Albanian, as argued in Turano (2021), even though the nominative-accusative alternation is not morphologically realized in Albanian indefinite nouns.

Finally, Serbian exhibits properties that parallel the ones discussed for the remaining languages: existentials use a *have* copula

that does not agree in number with the post-copular pivot (7a),⁵ while locatives are formed with a nominative case-marked nominal, a fully agreeing *be* copula and an obligatory locative marker (7b).

(7) Serbian

- a. Ima mačak-a ovde.
have.PRS.3SG cat-PL.GEN here
'There are cats here.'
- b. Mačk-e su ovde.
cat-PL.NOM be.PRS.3PL here
'The cats are here.'

However, Serbian presents a further complication; on a par with Albanian and Greek, Serbian post-copular pivots are not nominative-marked. Unlike Albanian and Greek, the Serbian pivot in (7a) is genitive-marked.

A further difference between Serbian and other Balkan languages regards the use of *have* copulas. In the other languages discussed in the present study, the use of different copulas in locative and existential constructions is preserved in past tense: a non-agreeing *have* copula is used in past existential constructions in Albanian in (8a), in contrast with the fully agreeing *be* copula in the past locative construction in (8b).

(8) Albanian

- a. Këtu kishte mac-e.
here have.PST.3SG cat-PL.ACC
'There were cats here.'
- b. Mac-e-t ishin këtu.
cat-PL.NOM-DEF be.PST.3PL here
'The cats were here.'

The difference between the two constructions in the past tense parallels the one shown in (5a-b) for present tense.

In the case of Serbian, the alternation between *be* and *have* is neutralized in the past, as both existential and locative constructions

⁵ As pointed out by a reviewer, Serbian allows for full agreement in constructions with a *have* copula and a post-copular nominative nominal:

(ii) Ima-ju mačk-e ovde.
have.PRS-3PL cat-PL.NOM here
'There are cats here.'

Such examples are discussed, among others, in Hartmann and Miličević (2008). I assume that these structures represent a third possibility, not discussed in the present work, which can be defined as "inverse locatives" (see Frasson 2024).

use a *be* copula.⁶ However, the difference regarding the agreement pattern is retained in the past tense: the existential copula (9a) does not agree in number and gender with the post-copular pivot, while the locative copula (9b) exhibits full agreement.

(9) Serbian

- a. Bi-l-o je mačak-a ovde.
be-PRT-3SGN be.PRS.3SG cat-PL.GEN here
'There were cats here.'
- b. Mačk-e su bi-l-e ovde.
cat.PL.NOM be.PRS.3PL be-PRT-3PLF here
'The cats were here.'

Finally, Serbian (and Slavic, more generally) past existentials reveal another interesting fact about the nature of existential agreement: the copula does not display gender agreement, as the participle form is always neuter.

Before moving to the analysis, Section 3.1 will present additional relevant interpretive properties of Balkan existentials.

3.1 Other Properties of Existentials

The Greek example in (6a) evidences an additional property of Balkan existential constructions. Unlike other examples, (6a) exhibits a singular pivot,⁷ which is generally interpreted as a partitive.⁸ Consider the following examples in the remaining languages:

(10) Albanian

- a. Ka sheqer në tryezë.
have.PRS.3SG sugar.SG.ACC on table
'There is some sugar on the table.'
- b. Ka tort-ë në tryezë.
have.PRS.3SG cake-SG.ACC on table
'There are (parts of) cake on the table.'

⁶ Some speakers of Serbian accept a *have* copula in the past too. Sobolev (1997) shows that there is variation in the use of *be* and *have* copulas in dialects of Serbian and Croatian. Here I mainly focus on constructions with *have*, leaving the question of the alternation with *be* for future research.

⁷ As shown in Kampanarou (2023), the distinction between nominative and accusative is not always morphologically marked in Greek. Crucially, examples parallel to the ones in (3), (4), (7) would not provide direct evidence for case alternation. The distinction between nominative and accusative is never marked in the Albanian indefinite declension.

⁸ According to an anonymous reviewer, the Bulgarian example in (12a) can (but needs not) be partitive. The partitive reading is ensured by the presence of an adverb like *malko* (*a little*).

(11) Serbian

- a. Na stolu ima šećer-a.
on table.LOC have.PRS.3SG sugar-SG.GEN
'There is some sugar on the table.'
- b. Na stolu ima tort-e.
on table.LOC have.PRS.3SG cake-SG.GEN
'There are (parts of) cake on the table.'

(12) Bulgarian

- a. Na masa-ta ima zaxar.
on table-DEF have.PRS.3SG sugar
'There is some sugar on the table.'
- b. Na masa-ta ima torta.
on table-DEF have.PRS.3SG cake
'There are (parts of) cake on the table.'

In all these examples, a singular indefinite mass or count noun is interpreted as a partitive pivot in *have* constructions.

In addition, post-copular pivots of existential constructions are generally incompatible (or less compatible) with an agent-oriented adverbs such as *intentionally* or *deliberately* (Grimshaw 1990) when such adverbs refer to the pivot. Conversely, locative sentences with pre-copular nominative pivots are compatible with such adverbs. Notice that this restriction holds in all the languages under analysis. Consider the difference in the interpretation of the existential constructions in (13a-17a), with respect to the locative constructions in (13b-17b):

(13) Albanian

- a. *Kishte vajz-a në festë me qëllim.
have.PST.3SG girl.PL at party with purpose
'There were girls at the party on purpose.'
- b. Vajz-a-t ishin në festë me qëllim.
girl.PL-DEF be.PST.3PL at party with purpose
'The girls were at the party on purpose.'

(14) Bulgarian

- a. *Umišleno imaše student-i na săbitie-to.
intentionally have.PST.3SG student-PL at event-DEF
'There were students at the event intentionally.'
- b. Student-i-te umišleno bjaxa na săbitie-to.
student-PL-DEF intentionally be.PST.3PL at event-DEF
'The students were at the event intentionally.'

(15) Greek (Kampanarou 2023)

- a. *Échei skopima paidiá sto páрко.
have.PRS.3SG deliberately kid.PL.ACC at park
'There are kids at the park deliberately.'
- b. Ta paidiá ítan sto páрко skopima.
the.PL.DEF kid.PL.NOM be.PRS.3PL at park deliberately
'The kids are deliberately at the park.'

(16) Macedonian

- a. *Na zabava-ta namerno imaše student-i.
at party-DEF intentionally have.PST.3SG student-PL
'There were students at the party intentionally.'
- b. Student-i-te namerno bea na zabava-ta.
student-PL-DEF intentionally be.PST.3PL at party-DEF
'The students were at the event intentionally.'

(17) Serbian

- a. *Namerno je bi-l-o devojak-a na žurci.
intentionally be.3SG be-PRT-3SGN girl-PL.GEN at party.SG.LOC
'There were girls at the party intentionally.'
- b. Devojk-e su namerno bi-l-e na žurci.
girl-PL.NOM be.3PL intentionally be-PRT-3PLF at party.SG.LOC
'The girls were at the party intentionally.'

The only possible interpretation for the existential examples in (13a – 17a) is the one in which the agent-oriented adverb reflects the intention of someone other than the pivot. Conversely, locative constructions in (13b – 17b) only allow for an interpretation by which the adverb reflects the intention of the definite noun.

One final consideration regards binding of possessives. Existential constructions exhibit a restriction on the binding of subject-oriented possessive *svoj* in Slavic languages. Consider the following examples:

(18) Serbian

- a. Student-i_y su u svoj-im_y sob-ama.
student-PL.NOM be.PRS.3PL in own-PL.LOC room-PL.LOC
'The students are in their own rooms.'
- b. *Ima studenat-a_y u svoj-im_y sob-ama.
have.PRS.3SG student-PL.GEN in own-PL.LOC room-PL.LOC
'There are students in their (*own) rooms.'

(19) Macedonian

- a. Student-i-te_y se vo svoi-te_y sob-i.
student-PL-DEF be.PRS.3PL in OWN-DEF room-PL
'The students are in their own rooms.'
- b. *Ima student-i_y vo svoi-te_y sob-i.
have.PRS.3SG student-PL in OWN-DEF room-PL
'There are students in their (*own) rooms.'

In the Serbian (18a) and Macedonian (19a) locative constructions, *svoj* is bound by the subject of predication. However, *svoj* resists binding by the genitive or indefinite pivot in the existential examples in (18b) and (19b).

3.2 Summary

In the present Section, I identified morphosyntactic and interpretive properties of Balkan existential constructions that evidence a contrast with locative constructions. Such properties are summarized in [tab. 1] for existentials and [tab. 2] for locatives.

Table 1 Morphosyntactic and interpretive properties of existential constructions

	Bulgarian	Macedonian	Albanian	Greek	Serbian
Copula	have	have	have	have	have/be
N Position	post-copular	post-copular	post-copular	post-copular	post-copular
N Case	-	-	accusative	accusative	genitive
Definite N	no	no	no	no	no
Agreement	neuter sg	neuter sg	sg	sg	neuter sg
Partitive	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Agent adverbs	no	no	no	no	no
svoj	no	no	-	-	no

Table 2 Morphosyntactic and interpretive properties of locative constructions

	Bulgarian	Macedonian	Albanian	Greek	Serbian
Copula	be	be	be	be	be
N position	pre-copular	pre-copular	pre-copular	pre-copular	pre-copular
N Case	-	-	nominative	nominative	nominative
Definite N	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Agreement	full	full	full	full	full
Partitive	no	no	no	no	no
Agent adverbs	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
svoj	yes	yes	-	-	yes

I argue for a unified analysis of existential constructions in Balkan varieties. I show that language specific differences, such as case properties of existential pivots in Albanian, Greek and Serbian, are captured in syntactic terms by assuming different Agree operations in the two types of constructions.

4 Towards an Analysis: The Interpretation of Existentials

Before moving to the syntactic analysis of existential constructions, I will briefly discuss their interpretation. Previous literature on existential constructions (Partee, Borschev 2004; Błaszczak 2009) showed that the incompatibility of an indefinite pivot with agent-oriented adverbs depends on the fact that the post-copular pivot is characterized by the lack of specific interpretive properties, such as agentivity and volitionality (as independently shown in Grimshaw 1990). In other words, the indefinite post-copular pivot in existential constructions is not agentive and does not have control over the situation.

At the information-structural level, existential constructions have been analyzed as presentative (thetic) structures in Lambrecht (1994): existentials report the existence of a newly introduced referent, but do not commit to the existence of the pivot in a specific place. Conversely, locative structures predicate the actual existence of a previously introduced referent, occupying a definite location.

In sum, existential pivots do not express agentivity, volitionality and definiteness, and they introduce a new discourse referent. As shown in Section 3, languages like Albanian, Greek and Serbian do not assign nominative case to existential pivots, which need to appear in a post-copular position and do not agree with the copula. Additionally, it was shown that existential pivots in Slavic languages fail to bind subject-oriented possessive *svoj*. These facts point to the lack of any syntactic or interpretative subject properties of existential pivots, following Keenan' (1976) hierarchy of subject features.

The lack of subject properties of the existential pivot indicates a general desubjectivization of the pivot (Sasse 1987): while the post-copular pivot is the logical subject of existential constructions, it does not occupy the grammatical position of the subject. Following Błaszczak (2009), in Section (5) I will propose that the existential pivot is merged as an internal argument in the VP complement.

5 The Syntax of Existential Constructions

5.1 Neuter Agreement and Expletive *pro*

The analysis presented in this study builds on the approach to the structure of existential constructions in Serbian and Lithuanian discussed in Frasson and Vaikšnoraitė (*forthcoming*). The main assumption behind this analysis is that the existential copula cannot assign nominative case to the pivot in languages like Albanian, Greek and Serbian because it assigns nominative case to a preverbal silent element. The impossibility of assigning nominative case to the post-copular pivot is also reflected in the agreement pattern displayed by existential constructions: singular (neuter) agreement is not a 'default' pattern, but rather represents full agreement with a silent expletive in the pre-verbal subject position.

In other words, the pivot cannot receive nominative case because of the presence of a null expletive *pro*, which is first merged in Spec-vP, intervening between the copula and the pivot. Therefore, the agreement pattern displayed by Balkan existentials is captured as an instance of regular subject-verb agreement.

Frasson and Vaikšnoraitė (*forthcoming*) propose a syntactic analysis of both locative and existential constructions, building on a minimalist version of the analysis originally presented in Kayne (1989) and Belletti (2006) for Romance past participle agreement, as discussed in D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008). This analysis shows that full agreement between a direct object and a past participle results from internal argument fronting. I propose that parallel considerations holds for full agreement between a VP-internal pivot and a copula. The minimalist version of such approach, discussed in D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008), can be summarized as follows:

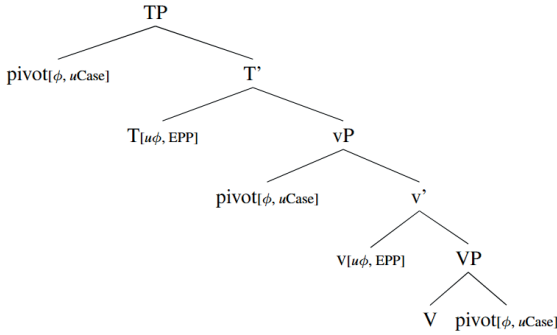
(20) Adapted from D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008)

- *v* has unvalued ϕ -features, as well as an EPP feature.
- *v* probes the VP-internal nominal in order to have its features valued.
- The VP-internal nominal has valued ϕ -features and is an active goal because of its unvalued case feature.
- The nominal moves to Spec-vP, it values the EPP and ϕ -features on *v*.
- T has unvalued ϕ -features too, as well as an EPP feature.
- T probes for the nominal in Spec-vP in order to have its features valued.
- The nominal moves to Spec-TP, it values the EPP and ϕ -features of T and receives structural nominative case.

Following this approach, I argue that the agreement pattern exhibited by locative constructions is associated with the promotion of

a post-copular pivot to subject position: the post-copular nominal is raised to Spec-vP, satisfies the EPP feature on v and values v's ϕ -features; the nominal is subsequently raised from Spec-vP to Spec-TP, it satisfies the EPP feature on T and values T's ϕ -features. The pivot is eventually assigned structural nominative case from T.

(21)



The locative pivot in (21) acts in all respects as a subject. It has the interpretive properties of the subject and, at the syntactic level, undergoes movement to Spec-TP, agreeing with the verb and receiving structural nominative case.

I argue that the agreement pattern exhibited by Balkan existential constructions results from similar structural considerations; however, it requires an account of the fact that, in presentative constructions like existentials, the pivot is left in situ. The agreement pattern exhibited by existentials depends on the presence of an expletive *pro* that satisfies v's EPP feature: since *pro* has valued neuter singular ϕ -features, the participle used in past tense copulas will exhibit singular neuter agreement.

D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008) reject the existence of expletive *pro* in view of its lack of visible properties at LF or PF. In view of this, they finally adopt a different analysis in their study.⁹ However, the Balkan data presented in Sections 3 and 4 suggest that there are clear LF and PF effects associated with existential constructions. LF effects are identified with the presentative interpretation of existentials, suggesting that the post-copular pivot cannot be analyzed as a subject. I argue that the subject function is rather performed by

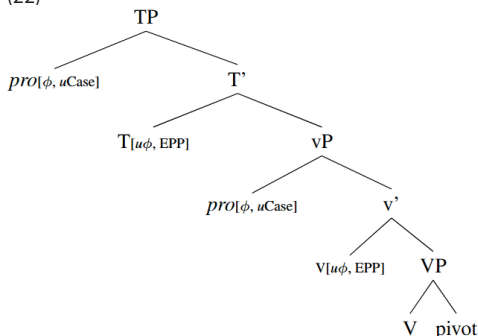
⁹ D'Alessandro and Roberts' (2008) approach builds on Italian data on participle agreement and shows that lack of agreement with a post-verbal nominal depends on a notion of phase and requires PF-mapping assumptions. While I do not discuss nor argue against this approach in the present paper, I maintain that the subject position in existential constructions is filled by a null expletive.

the pre-copular null expletive. As for PF effects, the Serbian example in (9) showed that existentials exhibit morphological neuter singular agreement: this specification cannot be analyzed as a default type of agreement, but rather a full agreement pattern with a singular neuter null subject. I argue that such effects motivate the requirement of an expletive *pro* in Spec-TP.

Therefore, my analysis departs from D'Alessandro and Roberts (2008); I show that the lack of agreement with the post-copular pivot in Balkan existential constructions reflects an agreement relationship holding between the copula and a pre-copular null expletive. Balkan expletive *pro* carries third person singular neuter valued features: the singular neuter features on the participle in past copulas provide clear morphosyntactic evidence that there is no default agreement; ϕ -features on the copula are fully valued and agree with a singular neuter expletive *pro*. I argue that this analysis can be extended to all the Balkan languages included in this study, even though gender is not always morphologically marked on the copula: the syntactic operation I adopt for existentials reduces to a regular instance of subject-verb agreement, whereby the languages under analysis mark gender only on participle forms.

The analysis of existential constructions proceeds as follows. Expletive *pro* is merged in Spec-vP and satisfies v's EPP ϕ -features; the presence of *pro* has an intervention effect, resulting in the impossibility of establishing an agreement relationship between the copula and the VP-internal pivot. Therefore, *pro*, rather than the pivot, raises to Spec-TP and satisfies the EPP on T, eventually valuing its ϕ -features as third person singular neuter. As a consequence, the expletive is assigned nominative case from T. The resulting syntactic configuration sees the pivot being c-commanded by the expletive nominative *pro*, and is therefore assigned structural accusative case in Albanian and Greek (contra Burzio 1986). I leave the discussion of genitive-marked pivots in Serbian to Section 5.2. The structure of existential constructions is shown in (22).

(22)



The syntactic configuration of existentials and locatives are therefore very similar and do not require additional functional heads (see Hartmann 2008 for an alternative proposal); the main difference in the agreement pattern exhibited by existentials depends on the presence of an expletive *pro* that constitutes the closest Goal for agreement with the copula in T, which is valued as singular neuter.

5.2 Genitive Case Assignment in Serbian

As shown throughout the paper, the main difference between the Albanian/Greek and Serbian agreement pattern consists in the type of non-nominative case used in existential pivots. Crucially, while Albanian and Greek indefinite pivots are accusative-marked, Serbian pivots are genitive-marked. This question was addressed in Frasson and Vaikšnoraitė (*forthcoming*), with respect to the use of genitive pivots in Serbian and Lithuanian existential constructions. To answer this question, it is necessary to reconcile the use of genitive with the definiteness effect (Milsark 1974), according to which post-copular pivots are generally indefinite. This is clearly shown in Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Macedonian, where a definite post-copular pivot is generally not accepted. I argue that the use of a genitive-marked pivot in Serbian, a language lacking dedicated definiteness markers on nouns, follows from similar considerations. Kagan (2009, 2012) shows that genitive marking is particularly likely to appear on indefinite internal arguments of a verb and establishes a correlation between the distribution of accusative and genitive and the lack of existential commitment. In view of the analysis of interpretive and syntactic properties of existentials, Frasson and Vaikšnoraitė (*forthcoming*) argued that genitive case is inherently licensed on the pivot in the sense of Woolford (2006), which can be summarized as in (23):

(23) Adapted from Woolford (2006, 117)

Inherent case is licensed by a v-head to a theta-position in its c-commanding domain.

In view of (23), I argue that post-copular Serbian pivots are assigned inherent genitive case by the copula in *v*. The pivot cannot receive an agent theta role from *v*, consistently with the definition of existentials as presentative (thetic) constructions; recall that the genitive-marked nominal is structurally analyzed as an internal argument that has the semantic properties of an object.

In Section 4, I showed that existential pivots have no structural or interpretive properties of subjects; such properties are only exhibited by raised pivots in locative constructions. In existentials, the pivot is realized VP-internally and an expletive *pro* is raised to Spec-TP, is assigned nominative case and agrees with the copula.

Following Frasson and Vaikšnoraitė (*forthcoming*), I argue that genitive assignment to Serbian post-copular pivots applies as an elsewhere principle:

(24) Adapted from Frasson and Vaikšnoraitė (*forthcoming*)

Genitive case is inherently licensed on post-copular pivots in Serbian existential constructions if:

- the pivot has the structural and interpretive properties of an internal argument, and;
- the pivot is not assigned an agent theta-role by *v*, and;
- a dummy form, lacking theta-roles, satisfies the EPP on *T*.

I remain agnostic on whether inherent case assignment is related to structural considerations resulting from the embedding of the pivot under additional functional heads on top of *N* (*Q*, *P*,...). For the purposes of the present discussion, I will assume that accusative pivots in Albanian and Greek and genitive pivots in Serbian do not exhibit structural differences and the difference in case marking is handled post-syntactically.

5.3 A Note on the Have Copula

One last question regards the nature of the *have* copula employed in Balkan existential constructions. In this section, I tentatively show that the distinction between existential and locative agreement patterns depends on a difference in the choice of copulas in the two types of constructions. A complete analysis of this issue is a matter of current research. The structure in (22) shows that Balkan existential copulas require an expletive *pro* in Spec-TP and a pivot in the VP complement. Conversely, locative structures (21) exhibit only one nominal, which is raised to Spec-TP. I argue that the requirement to merge an expletive *pro* in existentials depends on a difference in the featural composition of the two copulas.¹⁰

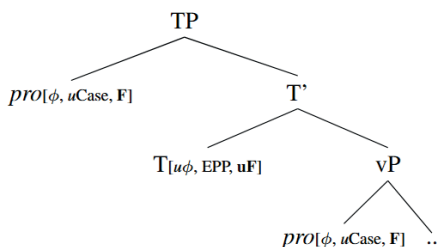
Błaszczak (2009) proposed that existential *have* copulas encode specific featural, thematic and formal properties and are therefore to be analyzed as separate lexical items. In this sense, the use of a dedicated existential copula represents a requirement of the LF interface for interpretive purposes. This idea is in line with the discussion carried out in Section 4, where I defined existentials as presentative structures, whose pivots are interpreted as new information. Such interpretation does not hold for locative constructions.

¹⁰ Recall that the discussion fully holds for Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Macedonian, but only partially for Serbian: as shown in Section 3, the copula alternation is morphologically realized in the present tense, by means of an alternation of *have* and *be* forms, while it is neutralized in the past tense: both existentials and locatives use *be* forms.

In the previous sections, I showed that the presentative interpretation obtains in the presence of an expletive *pro*, which moves to the structural subject position (Spec-TP) and blocks agreement with the pivot, which is left in the VP complement. I tentatively interpret this as a special requirement of existential T. The presentative interpretation associated with existentials allows only an element carrying additional interpretive properties to be raised to Spec-TP in existentials.

This possibility was discussed in the cartographic analyses presented in Rizzi and Shlonsky (2007) and Sigurðsson (2010). These studies show that the presence of interpretive features such as topic and focus may result in a special EPP property, requiring a (null or overt) expletive to be raised to a functional head higher than TP (more specifically, to SubjP in Rizzi and Shlonsky 2007, or to a functional head in the lower CP field in Sigurðsson 2010). In the present study, I assume no special EPP requirements and propose that the presentative interpretation exhibited by existentials results from the presence of an additional unvalued feature *uF* on T, which has an interpretive import and therefore needs to be valued by a constituent carrying a valued feature *F* with matching interpretive import. The Agree relationship proceeds as follows: T probes down to find a compatible Goal to value its *uF*. Expletive *pro* carries such a feature, making it a compatible Goal for T and agreeing with it (25).

(25)



In (25), an expletive *pro*, carrying *F* is merged in Spec-vP. When raised to Spec-TP, *pro* satisfies the EPP on T and values its ϕ -features, as well as the interpretive *uF* feature.

The use of a *have* copula in existential constructions morphologically signals the different featural composition of the copula in T.

In this last section, I provided additional evidence for the LF and PF motivations of expletive *pro* in existential constructions. Besides, I showed that the *have* copula carries no relation to the argumental structure of *be* copulas, allowing me to argue that *have* constitutes a separate lexical item. Crucially, the existential *have* copula requires an additional (accusative- or genitive- marked) nominal – the pivot, which is realized as an internal argument.

6 Conclusion

This paper proposed a unified syntactic approach to Balkan existentials. Based on Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek, Macedonian and Serbian data, I showed that the contrast between locative and existential constructions is realized in these languages using the same morphological and syntactic components, yielding parallel interpretations. I conclude that it is possible to define the *have*-existential construction as a generalized Balkan pattern: the case alternation in Albanian, Greek and Serbian depends on structural and argumental properties of existential constructions. In particular, I argued for an analysis of the existential copula as a separate lexical item, which takes two noun phrases: a post-copular pivot (indefinite and non-nominative – in languages that morphologically mark case) and a pre-copular expletive *pro*. This proposal is supported by the fact that the existential copula is spelled-out as *have* at PF. At LF, I proposed that the agreement relationship in existential constructions needs to hold between an expletive *pro* and T because of a feature F, associated with special interpretive properties related to the thetic nature of the existential construction.

Additional support for expletive *pro* was provided based on the agreement pattern exhibited by existential constructions: I showed that post-copular existential pivots do not act as grammatical subjects, but rather qualify as internal arguments, in that they do not agree with the copula. Conversely, the copula fully agrees in ϕ -features with the null expletive in the subject position.

Finally, I showed that the definiteness effect exhibited by the pivot holds across Balkan languages: the Serbian genitive-marked pivot expresses indefiniteness and lack of existential commitment, on a par with Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Macedonian indefinite pivots.

Abbreviations

acc	Accusative
def	Definite
expl	Expletive
f	Feminine
gen	Genitive
ind	Indefinite
loc	Locative
n	Neuter
nom	Nominative
part	Partitive
pl	Plural
prs	Present
prt	Participle
pst	Past
sg	singular

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Южнославянские проклитики и история союза *или*

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Abstract The paper deals with the conjunction *ili* ‘or’ used in some Slavic languages. I show that, despite earlier claims, the word originally had a final accent (at least in South Slavic): *ilī* is the only accentuation found in Middle Bulgarian manuscripts and probably was the predominant variant in Bulgarian until the mid-20th century. In Serbian, the first syllable should initially have had a rising tone due to Neo-Štokavian retraction. The word later became proclitic, hence the Bulgarian *īli* and BCMS *īli* found in some modern dictionaries. The original final accent is clearly compatible with the etymology we defend.

Keywords Slavic conjunctions. Historical accentology. Prosody. Proclitics. South Slavic languages. Etymology. Middle Bulgarian. Neo-Štokavian retraction.

Summary 1 Введение. – 2 Южнославянские языки. – 2.1 Восточные южнославянские языки – 2.2 Западные южнославянские языки. – 3 Восточнославянские языки. – 4 Этимология. – 5 Заключение.



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1 Введение

На большей части славяноязычной территории основным разделительным союзом является слово *или* (*ili*). Среди других, менее распространённых союзов, передающих это значение, следует отметить, среди прочих, *або*, *али*, *альбо*, *небо*.¹

Настоящая работа посвящена союзу *или*. Он весьма скудно засвидетельствован в западнославянских языках (маргинальные примеры в польском и словацком). Это слово было распространено в древнерусском, но утрачено в современных литературных стандартах украинского и белорусского. Наиболее широко оно представлено в южнославянских языках: в старославянском и церковнославянском разных изводов, в болгарском, македонском и сербохорватском / ВСМС (см. ЭССЯ 8, 168).

В этой статье мы сфокусируемся на просодической истории этого слова. Она никогда не становилась предметом специального исследования; нет данного союза в акцентуированном списке общеславянских лексем (Olander 2011), как и в единственном праславянском словаре, который систематически приводит акцентологические сведения (Derksen 2008). Лишь в (БЕР II, 66) утверждается, что исконно «ударение е било върху началната стричка» со ссылкой на сербохорватское *ѣли* и современную русскую форму.

Поскольку западнославянские данные в отношении акцентуации этого слова неинформативны, они не являются предметом рассмотрения настоящей публикации. Во втором разделе будут проанализирован материал южнославянских языков; в третьем — восточнославянских языков; в четвёртом будет обсуждаться соответствие просодических данных предполагаемой этимологии этого слова; в пятом разделе мы подведём итоги исследования.

2 Южнославянские языки

2.1 Восточные южнославянские языки

Мы не смогли обнаружить релевантные для нас данные из македонских диалектов, обладающих свободным ударением; македонский же литературный язык имеет фиксированное ударение. По этой причине в этом подразделе речь будет идти только про болгарский. Позволим себе лишь заметить, что союз *или* в

¹ Автор благодарит двух анонимных рецензентов за ценные замечания.

македонском литературном языке не является проклитикой (в отличие, скажем, от союза *и*, см., например, Усикова 2003, 44-6).

Рассмотрим данные из истории болгарского языка, касающиеся акцентуации интересующего нас союза.

Норовская псалтырь первой половины XIV века содержит шесть примеров на *или* с акцентным знаком над вторым слогом, и ни одного — с акцентным знаком над первым (НП 1989, 136). Среднеболгарская рукопись Евангелия конца XIV века, изученная Вальтером Хоком, содержит свыше ста конечнударных употреблений, двадцать — без акцентных знаков, и ноль примеров на начальнударное *или* (Носк 1992, 278-79).

Не менее однозначны и указания ранненовоболгарских памятников. В Троянском дамаскине (XVII век) более 180 примеров на *или́*, 10 — без знаков ударения; примеры на *и́ли* отсутствуют. В Ловечском дамаскине (тот же период) встретились только конечнударные примеры (свыше семидесяти; оба памятника просмотрены по Cyrillomethodiana):

1. *ако и дѣцѣта мѣ оумрѣтъ, или́ женѣ мѣ, или́ дрѣгы нѣкой ѿ роднината мѣ* (Троянский дамаскин, л. 7)
2. *и да нѣ е никогѣ прѣзѣно ѿ нѣговата рѣжѣба безѣ цѣра или́ безѣ сѣдника да сѣди прѣво* (Ловечский дамаскин, л. 14)

Это вместе с данными словаря Тихонравовского дамаскина этой же эпохи (РКБЕНО 2012, 352-3), в котором нашлись десятки примеров на *или́* и два примера на *и́ли*, позволяет заключить, что в XVII веке ударение *или́* было доминирующим.

Заметим, что вышеприведённые сведения хорошо соответствуют и тому, что в современном церковнославянском языке московского извода возможно только *или́* (и только это ударение представлено в церковнославянском подкорпусе НКРЯ).²

В акцентуированных памятниках начала XIX века *или́* встречается наряду с *или* без знаков ударения (Feuillet 2011: 422). Далее, акцентовка *или́* даётся в качестве единственной в словаре Герова (1897, 325). Весьма красноречивы данные русско-болгарского словаря (Благоевъ, Миндовъ 1914, 219), где в русской (!) части используется ударение *или́* (болгарские переводы там не акцентуированы), хотя в русском языке к тому моменту это ударение уже было крайне маргинальным (см. третий раздел настоящей статьи).

В (Романски 1955, 552; Йотов, Пономарева 1959, 178; Стефанова и др. 1964, 309) даётся только *или́*, исключительно этот вариант используется и в обоих изданиях учебного пособия (Ghinina,

² Благодарим анонимного рецензента журнала «Русская речь», рассматривавшего нашу работу по смежной теме, который указал нам на этот факт.

Nikolova, Sakazova 1965, 278; 1972, 107-8, 278, 347 et passim). В русско-болгарском словаре (Леонидова 1966, 141) эксплицитно указано, что русскому *или* соответствует болгарское *или́*, аналогично в болгарско-русских словарях (Татарова, Леонидова, Кошелев 1976, 176; Бернштейн 1986, 237 — переиздания чуть более ранних словарей).

Похожую картину наблюдаем и в болгарских диалектах. В текстах (BDLT) в основном представлено конечное ударение, ср. например:

3. *s'edemdes'è d'èna reklà ili sedemdesè l' m'às'ca reklà še gi derdž'ët* 'They'll keep them [captive] either seventy days or seventy months' (Golica 5, 63; текст записан в 1986 году Владимиром Жобовым в селе Голица Варненской области)

Случаи ударения на первом слоге преимущественно приходятся на тексты, записанные в регионах, близких к Северной Македонии.³

Указывается, что в современном литературном болгарском языке *или* может употребляться и с ударением на первом слоге, и с ударением на втором (РБЕ 1990). Следует отметить, правда, что в (ГСБКЕ, 1, 1982, 178; БЕРОН) сохранена рекомендация *или́*, и некоторые носители оценивают вариант *или* как более разговорный или маркированный. Это, однако, относится только к изолированному произношению; реально в потоке речи этот союз обыкновенно безударен, что отражено, например, в грамматиках (Бояджиев и др. 1998, 196—197; Alexander & Mladenova 2000, 160, 198, 307 et passim)⁴ (при этом первое издание признаёт и вариант *или́*).

Исходя из этих данных, следует признать по крайней мере для болгарского языка исходным акцентным вариантом *или́*.⁵

³ Следует отметить, что в болгарских диалектах существует также усечённый вариант этого предлога, *ил* — и иногда он используется и в литературных текстах тоже. Ср. македонское диалектное *ал* и разговорное *дал* из *али* и *дали* (ДРМЈ).

⁴ Недоверчивый читатель может обратиться к мультимедийному корпусу (BgSpeech) и послушать аудиопримеры. Оговоримся, что в болгарском, как и в русском, возможно употребление формы *или-или* в качестве самостоятельного слова (вынужденно ударного). См. пример любопытного произношения *или́-или́*: <https://forvo.com/word/%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8/#bg>.

⁵ Необходимо указать, что уже в пособии (Morfill 1898, 71, 89, 96), созданном, правда, не носителем болгарского языка, в разных местах используются разные акцентные варианты этого союза. В акцентуированном словаре (Стефановъ 1914, 218) это слово оставлено без ударения — впрочем, непонятно, сознательно ли это сделано.

2.2 Западные южнославянские языки

Исходя из болгарских данных, мы бы ожидали увидеть в новоштокавских говорах и в основанных на них литературных стандартах сербохорватского языка восходящее ударение на первом слоге — как результат ретракции акцента с конечного слога.

И действительно, мы находим ударение *ìli* в некоторых хорватских словарях и грамматиках, например (Vukušić et al. 2007, 203, § 792; ŠRHJ 2012; ERNJ 2016, 346). Но в штокавских сербских и в кайкавских словарях это слово часто фигурирует как проклитика (PCE 2007, 468; PCE 2011, 452; RKKJ 1984).

Однако в очень влиятельном словаре Вука Караджича дано нисходящее ударение на первом слоге — *̀или* (Караџић 2017), аналогично и в словаре (RHSJ 3, 787). В некоторых изданиях такой вариант даётся наряду с проклитическим (PCXKHJ 7, 680).

Такая акцентуация выглядит странно — как известно, новоштокавская ретракция (в результате которой ударения передвигаются на слог левее) даёт только восходящее ударение, а здесь встречаем нисходящее. Более объяснима она в случае словарей тех идиомов, где восходящий и нисходящий акцент противопоставлены только на долгих слогах (а в союзе *или* первый слог краткий), таких как брачский чакавский (Šimunović 2009) или косовские говоры (Елезовић 2017).⁶

Тем не менее, как мы считаем, этому нетривиальному ударению есть объяснение. Дело в том, что слова, в норме функционирующие как проклитики, могут при изолированном произношении получать нисходящий тон. Такое изолированное произношение возникает, например, перед вставными конструкциями:

4. *i žìvòtinje ì, štò je vắžno, lǝdi* (Barić 1997, 72) (долгое нисходящее ударение на союзе)

Или при прагматической выделенности проклитики:

5. *idemo ù kuću, a ne ìz kuće* (Vukušić et al. 2007, 200, § 775) (с кратким нисходящим ударением на предлоге)

Также можно сравнить наблюдаемую картину с предложениями *међу* и *против*, которые изначально имели ударение на втором слоге, но сейчас в некоторых словарях помечаются нисходящим ударением на первом слоге (скажем, вариант *pròtìv* даётся в PCE 2011, 1061 наряду с безударным вариантом того же предлога).

Таким образом, тезис составителей (БЕР II, 66), что сербская акцентуация *̀или* говорит в пользу изначального ударения на первом слоге в этом союзе, несостоятелен. Такое ударение при

⁶ Ср. диалектологические карты в (Капович 2019).

изолированном произнесении слова — это результат его грамматикализации и клитизации. Мы не видим оснований предполагать, что изначально ударение в сербохорватском отличалось от болгарского, однако с уверенностью что-либо можно будет сказать лишь после анализа старосербских акцентуированных рукописей.

На данный момент, к сожалению, ни один из двух самых объёмных источников по староштокавской акцентуации — Апостол из собрания Национальной библиотеки имени Кирилла и Мефодия в Софии (под № 889, датируется серединой XV века) и Евангелие-апракос из собрания Российской государственной библиотеки в Москве (фонд 178, № 7364, первая треть XV века) — не только не издан, но и даже не оцифрован (см. Пекунова 2022, 211). Тем не менее, И. С. Пекунова любезно сообщила нам, что, согласно её выпискам, в Евангелии регулярно встречается акцентовка *илѣ*, а в Апостоле — *ѣли*, хотя в обоих памятниках есть примеры и без знаков ударения (приносим благодарность за эти ценные сведения). Эти данные также могут указывать, что ранний староштокавский вариант был именно с ударением на последнем слоге.

В работах, касающихся этих памятников, равно как и других старосербских акцентуированных рукописей (ср., например, Булатова 1975; Ослон 2009), приводится только материал, касающийся изменяемых частей речи. Не рассматривается интересный нас союз и в фундаментальной работе по исторической акцентологии сербохорватского (Каровић 2015): к сожалению, наряду с колоссальным плодотворным импульсом, который придала славянской акцентологии революция, произведённая Христианом Стангом (Vermeer 1998), новая, морфонологическая парадигма также приучила лингвистов не обращать внимания на те слова, которые не спрягаются и не склоняются.⁷

3 Восточнославянские языки

Древнерусские и старовеликорусские акцентуированные памятники дают почти только ударение *илѣ* (Зализняк 2019, 286). Мы можем дополнить картину данными рукописей, не учтённых в указанной работе: ударение *илѣ* также представлено в двух церковнославянских рукописях русского происхождения XV и XVI веков (Ambrosiani 1991, 54-5, 139), в украинском служебнике 1604 года и в напечатанном в Москве служебнике 1656 года (Огієнко

⁷ В современном словенском языке союз *ili* не употребляется, хотя он отмечен, например, в Библии Юрия Далматина 1578 года (Besedje16).

1927, 19). В дальнейшем в украинском и белорусском языке это слово было утрачено и заменено на *або* и укр. *чи*, блр. *ці*.

При этом уже в древнерусскую эпоху данный союз был «полу-проклитикой», т. е. полноударной формой, которая могла, по-видимому, в некоторых особых случаях терять своё ударение (Зализняк 2008, 70).

Дальнейшая просодическая история этого слова в русском рассмотрена в нашей публикации (Киреев 2022). Позволим себе лишь кратко прорезюмировать выводы этого исследования: этот союз постепенно стал проклитикой, а при изолированном произношении русские проклитики приобретают начальное ударение: «...собственно сдвига [ударения] здесь в сущности не было. Эти служебные слова в нынешней речи стали просто безударными, а их потенциальная начальнoударность — это не что иное[,] как обычный способ произнести безударное слово, если его требуется выделить в речи или назвать отдельно (скажем, при грамматическом разборе)» (Зализняк 2016, 65). При этом вариант *или́* был основным по крайней мере до конца XVIII века, сохранялся на протяжении XIX века, а отдельные его реликты наблюдались и до середины XX века.

4 Этимология

Из работы в работу повторяется тезис, что слово *или* представляет собою соединение союза *и* с вопросительной частицей *ли*. Этот взгляд можно встретить, например, в (БЕР II, 66; ЭСРЯ МГУ 2/VII, 49; Цыганенко 1989, 155); недавно он был вновь высказан в (Zimmerling 2024). В (ЭССЯ 8, 168) речь идёт просто о «част[ице] *ли*». Обычно исследователей не смущает, что семантика в результате получается необъяснимая: почему сочетание сочинительного союза с маркером общего вопроса даёт значение ‘или’? Есть ли типологические параллели такому семантическому явлению?

Некоторые этимологические словари, например, (ERNJ 2016) предусмотрительно дистанцируются от точного указания на конкретное происхождение слова, ограничиваясь констатацией «*или* = *и* + *ли*» без вхождения в тонкости.

Правильную этимологию указала Жофия Шарапаткова в (ESJS 4, 241): вторая часть слова — это разделительный союз *ли* ‘или’. Он хорошо засвидетельствован в старославянских текстах, как в памятниках узкого канона (Цейтлин и др. 1994, 306), так и в более поздних болгарских текстах (СБР), а также в древнерусском языке (СДРЯ 4, 399—400). Ср. старославянские примеры (Цейтлин и др. 1994, 306):

6. *не мните ꙗко приѣхъ разоритъ закона ли пророкъ* (Мф. 5:17, в русском Синодальном переводе «не думайте, что Я пришел нарушить закон или пророков»)
7. *когда же та відѣхомъ больна ли въ темниці* (Мф. 25:39, в Синодальном переводе «когда мы видели Тебя больным, или в темнице, и пришли к Тебе»)

Этот союз был клитикой; таким образом, слово *или* составлено из двух слов: проклитического сочинительного союза *и* и энклитического разделительного союза *ли*. Это не уникальный пример такого образования: очень точной параллелью может служить слово *ибо*, также составленное из проклитики *и* и энклитического причинного союза *бо*. (Зализняк 2008, 73) выделяет целый класс таких лексем, которые он называет проклитико-энклитическими сращениями; сюда же, в частности, относятся такие слова, как *дабы* и *даже*; к упомянутым там словам можно добавить, например, чешский союз *nebo*.

Ударение в таких словах подчиняется общему «базисному правилу», т. е. выводится из морфонологических акцентных свойств морфем. Союз *и* (как и все проклитики) является «рецессивным» в терминологии В. А. Дыбо («минусовым» по А. А. Зализняку), а энклитический союз *ли* — «доминатным» («плюсовым»). Таким образом, исконное ударение *илí*, свидетельства в пользу которого были рассмотрены выше, полностью соответствует отстаиваемой нами этимологии.

5 Заключение

Мы показали, что, вопреки (БЕР II, 66), для болгарского языка ударение *илí* следует признать исконным: в пользу этого говорят письменные свидетельства начиная с самых ранних акцентуированных рукописей вплоть до XIX века и данные современных диалектов; возможно, конечноударный вариант был основным до середины XX века. Начальное ударение, которое отмечают некоторые современные словари, является результатом клитизации союза. Можно даже осторожно задаться вопросом, не сыграло ли в этом роль влияние русского языка.

Нет оснований предполагать другую акцентуацию и для старосербского. Вместе с восточнославянскими данными, которые не рассматривались детально в этой небольшой заметке, наличие интересующего нас слова в древнейших славянских памятниках и во всех ветвях славянских языков (пусть в западнославянских и довольно маргинально: см. ЭССЯ 8, 168) позволяет восстанавливать (поздне)праславянское **ili* с ударением на втором слоге.

Это слово входит в ряд так называемых проклитико-энклитических комплексов, потому что составлено из проклитического союза *и* и энклитического союза *ли* (а не частицы, как это часто указывают в этимологической литературе).

Среди других подобных комплексов в южнославянских языках, представляющих в частности акцентологический интерес, можно отметить болгарские вопросительные частицы и союзы *дали́* и (устаревшее и диалектное) *нелі́* (последнее слово, согласно РБЕ 1990, в роли частицы имеет ударение на втором слоге, а в роли союза — на первом). В старовеликорусских акцентуированных памятниках встречается только *нелі́* (Зализняк 2019, 286). Кроме того, в болгарском имеется слово *налі́* ‘не так ли; ведь’ (как и в русских диалектах, см. СРНГ 20, 13), которое считается контаминацией *нелі́* и *дали́* (БЕР IV, 481). В (РБЕ 1990) также приводится *али́* как диалектный вариант союза *или*.

Мы надеемся, что эта скромная работа поспособствует вниманию к диахроническим явлениям в акцентуации неизменяемых слов, которыми до сих пор лингвисты интересовались довольно мало.

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The Discursive Functions of *Zar*-Questions in Macedonian and Serbian

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Abstract This paper explores polar questions introduced by the particle *zar* in standard Macedonian and Serbian. The pragmatic-discourse properties of *zar*-questions, despite being a distinct type, remain understudied. The paper aims to establish the functional distribution and the pragmatic properties of these questions by analyzing examples from literary prose. The identified three discourse types exhibit striking similarity in both languages, which suggests a convergent functional development of *zar*. It also shows that *zar* functions as a modal operator of assertiveness rather than a typical interrogative particle.

Keywords Biased questions. Rhetorical questions. Assertiveness. Particle. Language contact.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 *Zar* in the Literature. – 3 Theoretical Observations. – 4 research Procedure. – 5 Results of the Analysis. – 5.1 Rhetorical Questions. – 5.2 Assertive Questions. – 5.3. Biased *Zar*-Questions. – 5.4. *Zar* in Marginal Functions. – 6 Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

This paper presents the findings of our investigation of questions headed by *zar* in Serbian and *zar* or *zareme* in Macedonian referred to as *zar*-questions.¹ Since both Macedonian variants are functionally identical in all contexts they are subsumed under the same label. Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the use of *zar* in affirmative and negated sentences, respectively.

- (1) a. *Zar vekje pristigna vozot?* (M)²
b. *Zar je već stigao voz?* (S)
'Has the train really arrived?'
- (2) a. *Zar ušte ne pristigna vozot?* (M)
b. *Zar još nije stigao voz?* (S)
'Hasn't the train arrived yet?'

Zar is defined in Serbian and Macedonian grammars as an interrogative particle implying an opposite polarity in yes/no or polar questions (Minova-Gjurkova 1994, 15; Piper et al. 2022, 228). Polar questions seek to affirm or negate the truth of the proposition they encode as in (3). This type of question is characterized by a rising intonation and may include interrogative particles such as the initial *dali* (M) / *da li* (S) or the enclitic focus particle *li*.

- (3) a. *Pristigna (li) vozot?* (M)
b. *Je li voz stigao?* (S)
'Has the train arrived?'

The presence of bias is also detected in affirmative polar questions with emphatic intonation as in *Vozot pristigna?! 'The train has arrived?!'*. In such questions the "emphatic intonation alone produces negative bias" (Reese 2007, 131), rendering it synonymous with its affirmative *zar*-version (1). Both questions express doubt regarding the train's arrival.

Considering the above properties of *zar*-questions, we argue that they constitute a distinct type of yes/no-question, classified in Serbian grammars as "leading" (*navodeća*) because they "suggest what response is expected" (Piper et al. 2022, 500). These authors note

¹ Sentence-final uses of *zar*: *Kje odime site, zar ne?* (M) *Svi ćemo ići, zar ne?* (S) 'We are all going, aren't we?' are beyond the scope of the paper.

² The parenthesis next to each example indicates the name of the language: (M) for Macedonian, (S) for Serbian.

that both negated and affirmative *zar*-questions “imply assertion of the opposite.”

Drawing upon Topolinjska (2009), we define *zar*-questions as pre-suppositional or biased, as they presuppose either a negative or positive response. Our objectives include establishing the discourse functions of *zar*-questions in contemporary Serbian and Macedonian language and examining the factors influencing their distribution. The analysis aims to uncover the extent of convergent application of *zar* in both languages. To achieve these goals, we analysed over 400 examples of *zar*-questions extracted from contemporary Macedonian and Serbian prose literature.

We aim to demonstrate that *zar* in biased polar questions serves modal and expressive functions. The former arises from the conflict between the speaker’s prior belief and contextual evidence. *Zar* alters the proposition’s polarity: in affirmative *zar*-questions, the speaker believes the proposition *p* is not true, while in negated versions, the speaker believes that *p* is true. For instance, in (1), the speaker assumes the proposition encoded in the non-negated *zar*-question is untrue despite evidence to the contrary (e.g., the train sitting on the platform long before the departure time). The speaker anticipates a negative response as they still believe the train has not arrived.

Considering the semantic-pragmatic contribution of *zar* to polar questions, we argue that *zar* is more than a mere interrogative particle. Beyond its modal nature, it carries affective overtones contributing to the functional diversity of biased polar questions in discourse. Thus, the emotionally charged *zar*-question in (4) intends to criticize the addressee.

- (4) *Zar ne ti e sram?* (M)
Zar te nije sramota? (S)
‘Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?’

The paper is organized in six sections: the next two sections offer a brief overview of the treatment of *zar* in the literature and the theoretical prerequisites employed in the research. This is followed by a description of the research procedure. The fifth section presents and discusses the results of the analysis. Finally, a brief overview of the conclusions is provided.

2 *Zar* in the literature

As previously mentioned, *zar* is considered an interrogative particle expressing negative expectation, surprise (Piper et.al 2022, 228), disbelief, and emphasis (Minova-Gjurkova 1994, 152). Vlajić-Popović (2016) argues that the definitions of *zar* listed in Serbian dictionaries

over the last three centuries can be classified in two main functions: interrogative-exclamative and modal (when *zar* has no fixed sentence position). Macedonian dictionaries attribute similar properties to *zar/em* but also note its dialectal function as a causal subordinator (“conjunction”), meaning ‘because.’

On the syntactic plane, *zar* exhibits limited mobility; it typically occupies the initial position before a focused sentence element and bears the sentence stress. For example: *Zar utre kje odiš so nego?* or *Zar so nego kje odiš utre?* (M) ‘Are you going with him tomorrow?’ Moreover, *zar* can be used in an elliptical question containing only the focused element, as in *Zar so nego?* ‘With him?’ or *Zar utre?* ‘Tomorrow?’ (Minova-Gjurkova 1994,152).

Zar is a Turkish loan from *zahir* that has two meanings depending on its syntactic position: ‘obviously’, ‘apparently’ in the initial and ‘probably’ in the final-sentence position (Vlajić-Popović 2016, 73). It is interesting that the original *zahir* was not used in interrogative function which was developed in the recipient Balkan Slavic languages.³

Vlajić-Popović (2016, 75-6) argues that the particle was borrowed into BCMS languages in the 17th century and underwent simplifying phonological changes (*zاهر* > *zajer* > *zaer* > *zar*) whose final product was *zar* in 18th century texts. This reanalysis was accompanied by the syntactic movement of *zar* from final, through middle to initial sentence position. The author documents these changes with examples from Serbian works from 19th century. *Zar* started out as an epistemic adverb in the final position with the meaning of ‘probably’, but in the middle position it could be interpreted both as ‘probably’ and ‘certainly’ (*Ti si moja žena, tako je zar Bog osudio* ‘You are my wife, that is obviously how the Lord decided’).⁴ The syntactic mobility of *valjda*, with which it was synonymous, might have prompted the movement of *zar* to the initial position (*Zar valjda da smo svi jednaki* ‘Probably/obviously we are all the same’).⁵ Subsequently, under the pressure of intonation, it acquired the function of an interrogative-exclamative particle (*Zar ima dva sata kako sme došli?* ‘Has it been really two hours since we came?’).⁶

However, some Bulgarian sources cited in Vlajić-Popović (2016) suggest the Turkish *zira* (dialectal *zere*) ‘because, since’ may have been a possible source. Although Vlajić-Popović has not found mention of a causative use of *zar* in Serbian dictionaries, she provides an example where *zar* may be interpreted as an “elliptical” *pošto* ‘because’: *Zar [pošto su] izgrdili me i nagrdili a ti mene da se stišam.*

³ Its use is becoming obsolete in modern Turkish.

⁴ Vlajić-Popović (2016, 76)

⁵ Vlajić-Popović 2016, 77)

⁶ Vlajić-Popović (2016, 79)

‘Since they scolded and offended me, but you are telling me to calm down.’⁷

On the other hand, Friedman and Joseph (forthcoming) note that *zar* in dialectal Bulgarian comes from Turkish *zira* in the meaning ‘yes, right’. It seems that *zar* has subsumed the meanings of the loans *zira* and *zahir*, but the routes of their development remain unclear. Vlajić-Popović (2016, 80) offers another hypothesis about the origin of *zar* based on hybridization: the Turkish *zahir* merged with the older Slavic interrogative particle **zaž(e)* on the Štokavian dialectal territory in seventeenth century.

Unfortunately, the absence of historical data on the development of *zar* in Macedonian prevents us from drawing definitive conclusions. It is documented that certain dialects utilized a causative *zer*, similarly to the dialectal Bulgarian *zer*. For instance, in Vojdan Černodrinski’s play, published in 1900, the final *zer* functions as an affirmative particle, conveying the meaning of ‘certainly’ (*Kje barame, zer! Vigjame oti vo ova ođja e nemat*. ‘We’ll certainly look for her! We saw that she is not in this room’), whereas the initial *zer* creates causal and contrastive implicatures similarly to ‘otherwise’ (*Da miete arno toj tiganot, zere žimi vera, koskite kje vi kršam*. ‘Clean the pan well, or/ because really swear to God, I’ll break your bones’). In the same period, in folk stories by Marko Cepenkov, *zer* exhibits ambiguity, encompassing modal, causative, and expressive interpretations. It is reasonable to assume that this semantic complexity facilitated its grammaticalization into an epistemic particle.

From a typological perspective, only a few Slavic languages seem to possess a specialized lexical unit with functions similar to *zar*. *Zar* is common in all Balkan Slavic languages (BCMS) except for Bulgarian where *nima* is used (Tisheva 2018).⁸ The nearest functional equivalents of *zar* in other Slavic languages are the Russian *razve* and *neuželi* (Levontina 2014), or polysemous particles such as *copak* in Czech, *czyz/chyba* in Polish, and *hiba* in Ukrainian. It is claimed *zar*, a conversationally-rooted Turkism, can be regarded as an ERIC loan⁹ with a potential status of a Balkanism (Vlajić-Popović 2016). These loans represent discourse-related language elements that were borrowed in regular face-to-face interactions in intense and sustained language contact in the Balkans (Friedman, Joseph forthcoming).

⁷ Vlajić-Popović (2016, 80)

⁸ In some Bulgarian dialects *zer* is also used.

⁹ ERIC abbreviation stands for Essentially Rooted In Conversation (Friedman, Joseph forthcoming).

3 Theoretical Observations

Zar-questions, like other biased questions, exhibit a high level of context dependence, relying on the presence of common ground among interlocutors. As defined by Goodhue (2018, 43), common ground refers to shared information accepted as true by all participants in a conversation. Common ground encompasses two forms of knowledge: general, encyclopedic knowledge about the world and interpersonal knowledge that the speaker possesses about the interlocutor and the situational context (Berio et al. 2017).

It is crucial for the understanding of *zar*-questions to recognize that they, like other biased questions, possess a binary semantic structure comprising assertive and inquisitive components (Reese 2007, 79). Bias arises from the epistemic conflict: the speaker holds a prior belief that *p*, expecting a positive response to the *zar*-question, but is confronted with contextual evidence contradicting the truth of *p* (Büring, Gunlogson 2000; Goodhue 2018).

The conflict is more pronounced when the speaker is reluctant to accept evidence challenging their initial belief. Used in dialogic discourse, *zar*-questions typically respond to the preceding statement or current situation that diverges from the speaker's expectations.¹⁰ Therefore, they typically occur in contradiction contexts (Büring, Gunlogson 2000; Romero, Han 2004). This was confirmed in our research on Macedonian translational equivalents of English biased high negation questions (Mitkovska, Bužarovska 2024) and in Todorović's presentation (2022) on Serbian *zar*-questions.¹¹

Due to a binary semantic structure, *zar*-questions, similarly to other biased questions, operate as disguised assertions (Reese 2007, 8), or equivalently function as assertions with an opposite polarity. Such questions lack informativeness as the implied answer is evident and known to the interlocutors (Rhode 2006, 135), forming part of their shared knowledge. However, it's crucial to note that not all *zar*-questions are rhetorical. When the inquisitive component prevails over the assertive, we obtain a biased polar question. For instance, the question *Zar ne e toplo?* 'Isn't it warm?' (M) necessitates a response, preferably positive.

Building upon the theoretical insights outlined above, we propose the following hypotheses:

¹⁰ For example, the question (1) *Zar vekje pristigna vozot?* (M) 'Has the train already arrived?' is only felicitous if the speaker previously thought that the train had not arrived but learns of the train's arrival. The *zar*-question signals that the speaker has become aware that their belief does not correspond to the new reality.

¹¹ The author claims that negated *zar*-questions are most felicitous in situations of strong situational counterevidence, while affirmative *zar*-questions usually occur in neutral situational contexts.

- a. *Zar*-questions do not constitute a uniform discourse type because their illocutionary force remains ambiguous between a question and an assertion. The degree of assertiveness regarding the truth of the proposition emphasizes either the assertive or inquisitive element in their binary semantic structure. Consequently, we expect a scalar distribution of *zar*-questions ranging between assertions and questions.
- b. Given the close language contacts between Serbian and Macedonian, we expect to identify similar discourse types of *zar*-questions in the two examined languages.

4 Research Procedure

To determine the functional distribution of *zar*-questions in the standard language, we analyzed over 400 examples extracted from 15 Macedonian and 8 Serbian literary works (novels and plays) spanning the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. The examples were fed into two databases: Macedonian 207 and Serbian 210 *zar*-questions. The following works were examined: *Kaleš Angja*, S. Popov (SP); *Lozje*, B. Koneski (BK); *Selected works*, V. Maleski (VM); *Headstrong*, S. Janevski (SJ), *A Branch in the Wind*, K. Čašule (KČ); *The White Plain*, S. Drakul (SD); *Weed*, P. Andreevski (PA), *The Salonika Bombers*, J. Boškovski (JB); *Fools*, M. Jovanovski (MJ), and several works by younger authors: R. Bužarovska (RB), K. Maleska (KM) and B. Crvenkovska (BC). Serbian examples were found in: *Koštana*, B. Stanković (BS); *Autobiography*, B. Nušić (BN); *The Bridge on the Drina*, I. Andrić (IA); *A Novel about London*, M. Crnianski (MC); *Barking at the Stars*, M. Vitezović (MV); *Rabies*, B. Pekić, (BP); *Monkey Writing*, S. Basara (SB) and the stories from the *Anthology of Serbian Short Story* (SA) written after the second decade of the 20th century. The disparity between the number of pages in the examined works and the number of extracted *zar*-questions indicates their infrequent use in the written language. In fact, they are a feature of oral communication, as confirmed by their greater prevalence in works containing dialogues.¹²

Each example was analyzed using various parameters, including the communicative goal of the question within a broader context, assertiveness, the illocutionary function of the question, and affective meaning. The examples in each database were categorized into three groups: rhetorical questions, assertive questions, and biased *zar*-questions. The final stage of the analysis involved comparing the distribution of *zar*-questions in the two languages. The three discourse types of *zar*-questions are defined as follows:

¹² The choice of *zareme* or *zar* in Macedonian seems to depend on the preferences of the author. Some authors use both forms interchangeably.

- a. Rhetorical Questions (RQs): These involve indirect assertions expressing the speaker's confidence in the truth of a previous belief. Conflicting evidence is emphatically rejected.
- b. Assertive Questions (AQs): These are also indirect assertions lacking affective meaning and, in some cases, lack interrogative intonation.
- c. Biased Questions (BQs): These are biased polar questions that seek confirmation of the speaker's doubt regarding the truth of their previous belief.

We acknowledge some methodological limitations in this research which are first due to the absence of a corpus of oral speech, so the analysis was based on examples from literary works. Second, certain subjectivity in distinguishing between rhetorical questions and assertive questions may not have been entirely avoided as their interpretation depends on a wider context and tone.

5 Results of the Analysis

Table 1 presents the quantified results of the distribution of the *zar*-question in our sample.

Table 1 Frequency of occurrence of *zar*-question types in the sample

Type of <i>zar</i> -question	SERBIAN ZAR	Nr 210	MACEDONIAN ZAR/EM	Nr 207
	N	%	N	%
Rhetorical (RQ)	84	40	101	49
Assertive (AQ)	49	23	61	29
Biased (BQ)	77	37	45	22
Total	210	100	207	100

Results reveal that RQs dominate in both samples, but they are more numerous in Macedonian (40% in Serbian vs. 49% in Macedonian). The other two types also manifest variable distribution: AQs are more frequent in Macedonian (29%) than in Serbian (23%), but BQs prevail in Serbian (37%) in contrast to Macedonian (22%). However, these results should be considered as indicators of tendencies in the distribution of *zar*-questions, as the investigation relied on examples from selected literary works. Moreover, the frequency and the discourse function of *zar*-questions in these works depend whether the author's style is conversational and whether the narrative develops through dialogic discourse. It is important to note that we have identified three discourse types in both languages with a similar distribution (except for the ratio of AQs and BQs in each language). Importantly, not all *zar*-questions neatly fit into the defined three discourse

types; the boundaries between them are fuzzy, especially between the two types of indirect assertions: RQs and AQs. Intermediate uses were detected in both samples, particularly in monologues.

5.1 Rhetorical Questions

The prevalence of rhetorical questions in the sample, considerably outnumbering other question types, underscores their versatility and communicative effectiveness. These *zar*-questions serve as rhetorical devices that challenge the addressee's preceding contribution by conveying criticism, rebuke, reproach, indignation, or disapproval. No response to rhetorical question is expected, as they typically aim to persuade the addressee to reconsider their beliefs or behavior (Frank 1990, 726), often employing semantically incompatible lexicon and stylistic expressivity. However, it has been argued (e.g., Rhode 2006, 142) that rhetorical questions do not generate surprise due to the obviousness of the answer. This observation was confirmed in our research, where surprise effects were mostly characteristic of biased *zar*-questions.

In pragmatic theories grounded in the concept of 'face,' rhetorical questions are considered mitigating devices in face-threatening speech acts (Brown, Levinson 1978, 228-230). The speaker opts for an interrogative form to soften an offensive statement (cf. Celle 2018). Some authors, however, argue that a rhetorical question reinforces the assertion, thereby moderating criticism (Frank 1990, 738). Its interrogative form "masks" the directness of the assertion while simultaneously making it more convincing and expressive (Frank 1990, 727).

To examine the illocutionary function of the rhetorical questions in the sample, we applied Špago's classification (Špago 2020), distinguishing three subtypes: aggressive, ironic, and neutral. The first two types are considered hostile speech acts. The most numerous in the sample are aggressive rhetorical questions, expressing emphatic non-acceptance of a new situation (e.g., addressee's behavior) because it contradicts the views and/or moral norms of the speaker. Such emotionally charged verbal attacks on the addressee are found in various speech acts: reproach, insult, criticism, disapproval, objection. They may contain strong language to express anger and irritation (5). The rhetorical questions below possess a great deal of aggression, often marked with an exclamation mark (6).

- (5) Čakali nenasitni, zarem ne vi beše dosta? (M, DS)¹³
'You greedy hyenas, didn't you have enough?'

¹³ The first letter in the parenthesis indicates the language of the example, while the other two represent the initials of the source writer. Although all the examples

- (6) Zar ga ne poznaeš, budalo! (S, DM)
'Don't you recognize him, stupid!'

The speaker's indignation typically arises from dissatisfaction with the interlocutor's behavior (7-8). The majority of these *zar*-questions occur in speech acts expressing reproach and criticism.

- (7) Zarem i od nas kje prodolžiš da kradeš? (M, SD)
'Will you continue to steal from us?'

- (8) Zar se tako ponašaju šampioni? (S, MV)
'Is this behavior fit for a champion?'

Criticism can also be directed at a third person not participating in the conversation.

- (9) Zar ne gleda deka doagjaat po nas? (M, BC)
'Doesn't he see that they are coming after us?'

Certain rhetorical questions seek to exert influence by appealing to the addressee's comprehension of the speaker's position. Despite containing disapproval, these questions are not intended as offensive speech acts.

- (10) Zarem ne go sfakjaš toa? (M, DS)
'Don't you realize that?'

- (11) Isuse Hriste, Andrea, zar ne razumeš? (S, BP)
'Jesus Christ, Andrea, don't you understand?'

Rhetorical questions conveying irony or sarcasm are relatively scarce in the sample. Characterized as stylistic strategies expressing the opposite of what is explicitly stated, they are distinguishable in terms of communicative intent: sarcasm involves mockery and insult (Bowes, Katz 2011, 216). Various forms of sarcasm are linked to the ways in which the contrast between literal and implied meanings is presented (Celle 2018). Sarcasm is frequently associated with the use of offensive expressions and hyperbole (12, 13), which exaggerate the actual situation and thereby intensify the contrast.

are extracted within a broader context, we provide only the *zar*-question due to space limitations.

- (12) Zarem tvojot semokjen razum ne e vo sostojba da ja objasni taa prosta zagatka? (M, DS)
'Can't your powerful intellect explain that simple riddle?'

- (13) Zar što ja govorim, to pas laje i vetar nosi? A? (S, BS)
'Is everything I say is like barking carried by the wind?'

Neutral rhetorical questions often occur in monologic discourse, where the speaker communicates a sense of non-acceptance or reservation towards the emerging situation.

- (14) Zar nikogaš nema da si poveruvam samiot sebesi? (M, KČ)
'Will I never believe myself?'

- (15) A zar ja ne beh mlad? (S, BS)
'Wasn't I young too?'

A series of neutral rhetorical questions was identified within monologic sequences, primarily intended for self-criticism. In the initial monologue (16), the speaker refuses to accept the somber reality following an earthquake, contemplating whether they should have shared the fate of others. In the rhetorical questions of the subsequent monologue (17), the speaker reproaches themselves for the anticipated future fate of a beloved person.

- (16) Zar navistina sum živ? Zar navistina sega sum sam? Zar treba da bidam ziv svedok na sudbinata na edno golemo semejstvo? (M, BI)
'Am I really alive? Am I really alone now? Should I be a living witness to the fate of a large family?'

- (17) Gde su oni? Kud idu, — kud vodi tu ženu? Zar će, odevena u tralje, hodati po Londonu? Zar će samo svoju lešinu da joj pokaže, da bi se i ona ubila? (S, MC)
'Where are they? Where are they going, — where is he leading this woman? Will she walk around London dressed in rags? Is he just going to show her his corpse so that she'll kill herself too?'

5.2 Assertive questions

In Macedonian, AQs are more prevalent (29%) than in Serbian (23%), potentially influenced by the narrative style of certain authors. It is noteworthy that distinguishing AQs from RQs is challenging since both involve indirect assertions.

Almost all Macedonian and some Serbian examples categorized in this group lack emphasis and marked intonation, as evidenced by the absence of a question mark. Furthermore, the implied answer

is often more imposed by the speaker than evident to both interlocutors (Špago 2020, 70). The distinction from the previous class becomes apparent when comparing two questions with similar content: a rhetorical question (18) and an indirect assertion (19). They appear to differ in the strength of the epistemic conflict, which is more pronounced in the former due to its interrogative intonation.

- (18) Zarem nema kraj na ovie raspnuvanja? (M, VM)
'Is there no end to these torments?'

- (19) Zar ima kraj na ova umiranje. (M, GA)
'Is there an end to this dying?'

In contrast to RQs, AQs do not aim to manipulate the speaker's behavior, even when expressing disagreement and disapproval (20, 21). The speaker presents a counterargument without strongly imposing on the addressee. The lack of interrogative intonation in such *zar*-questions suggests that the inquisitive component is minimized, resulting in increased assertiveness. On the other hand, some instances are characterized by emphatic intonation (marked with an exclamation mark), which aligns them more closely with rhetorical questions.

- (20) Zar so tie gnasi da se sftime! Nikako! (M, JS)
'Should we become family with these lowlives? Never!'

- (21) Zar ja ne znam šta ide! (S, BS)
'Don't I know what is coming?'

In non-contradiction contexts, *zar*-questions function as an appeal for the addressee to share speaker's belief. A positive response is expected, as the truth of the proposition is not up for debate. In Macedonian, *neli*-questions are often employed in such contexts, particularly when expressing admiration (22). In more neutral settings, a *zar*-question appears to support the speaker's preceding contribution without necessarily seeking the interlocutor's agreement (23).

- (22) Zar to nije lepo? (S, MC)¹⁴
'Isn't it nice?'

- (23) Dovali hiljade Poljaka, pa zar to nije prevara? (S, MC)
'They have brought thousands of Poles, isn't it a scam?'

¹⁴ The Macedonian translation equivalent is *Neli e ubavo*?

Confidence in the truth of the proposition is prominent in the following examples, where the speaker presents a counterargument against a potential change (24) or issues sharp criticism directed at the interlocutor's activities (25).

- (24) Zar na starost da se mažam, imam sinovi, kjerki, vnuci. (M, JS)
'Oh, do you really think that should I get married in my old age: I have sons, daughters, grandchildren.'
- (25) Zar vam nije naređeno da dućane držite otvorene! (S, IA)
'Weren't you ordered to keep your shops open!'

The high assertiveness level of assertive questions (AQs) makes them effective in reinforcing the speaker's preceding claim. In such uses *zar* carries a causal inference.

- (26) Kje najdete i drugi, zar malku kućinja ima niz selovo. (M, PA)
'You will find others... there are many dogs in this village, aren't there.'
- (27) Neću dozvoliti da o nama snime film. Zar da nas prikaziju po dvoranama u kojima se druge ljube? (S, MV)
'I won't let a film made about us. They would certainly show us in theaters where others kiss.'

In some *zar*-questions, *zar* seems to function as a discourse particle that strengthens the force of the assertion. If the question's polarity changes, *zar* can be replaced by the intensifying particle *pa* 'well'. Of course, each variant preserves its subtle pragmatic differences.

- (28) Zar drugite imaat poinakvo detstvo. (M, BI)
'Others don't have a different childhood, do they.'
- (29) Oh, dušo moja, zar je meni u ovome trenutku do šnicle. (S, BN)
'My dear, I am not in the mood for steak right now, am I.'

Some assertive questions employed for persuasion closely resemble rhetorical questions. In (30), the speaker consoles a mother grappling with the tragic loss of her child through a series of *zar*-questions.

- (30) Nemoj mori Veliko... zar i ti treba da se otepaš, zar sakaš siraci da gi ostaviš, ... zar ušte eden grob sakaš da ovariš. (M, PA)
'Don't Velika, dear, ... do you want to die, do you want to leave them orphans..., do you want to open another grave.'

5.3 Biased *Zar*-Questions

Biased *zar*-questions are distinguished from the previous two discourse types by the prevalence of the inquisitive component in their semantic structure. Faced with new contextual evidence, the speaker begins to doubt the truth of their previous belief and requires a response from the addressee (positive or negative) to confirm their initial presupposition. The new reality, such as the interlocutor's unexpected appearance (31), the absence of the expected object (32), surprising information (33), is not vehemently rejected. These questions often convey disbelief and bewilderment as speaker expectations are not met.

- (31) – Gligore, *zar* toa si ti? - izvikna Arso. – Oho, brat moj! (M, GA)
‘– Gligor, is that really you? - Arso shouted. – Yea, my brother!’
- (32) – Zarem Gjero ne ti donese kafe od pečalba? – Ne. (M, JS)
‘– Didn't Gero bring you some coffee from abroad? – No.’
- (33) – *Zar* si došao samo zbog toga? – Morao sam, jedino ti možeš da shvatiš... (S, AS)
‘– Did you really come just for that? – I had to, only you can understand...’

The inquisitive nature of these questions is underscored by the presence of doubt. In certain *zar*-questions, this doubt is lexically manifested by the epistemic adverb ‘possibly.’

- (34) *Zar* e možno da se vljubil? (M, BC)
‘Is it possible that he fell in love?’
- (35) *Zar* nije možda imao i neki drugi uzrok? Na primer, žalost za otadžbinom. (S, MC)
‘Couldn't he have had some other reason? For example, yearning for the motherland.’

In cases where the answer is apparent, some AQs expressing surprise may serve as veiled criticism or encouragement.

- (36) *Zar* i ti pcueš? (M, BI)
‘Do you swear too?’
- (37) *Zar* se nećeš javiti? (S, BP)
‘Aren't you going to answer?’

Surprise is expressed in a few examples that resemble emphatic rhetorical questions. They were categorized as BQs since they prompt (and receive) a response.

(38) – Zarem kje umreme za voda? – Nikoj ne misli na toa... (M, SJ)
‘Will we die for water? – Nobody thinks about that...’

(39) – A zar i ti patiš, pobogu, Ananije? – Patim. (S, AS)
‘Do you, for Christ’s sake, suffer too, Ananie? – Yes, I do.’

Some examples exhibit increased assertiveness, leaning towards an AQ interpretation.

(40) Pa, zar se nismo složili da ovde nema nikakve države? (S, SA)
‘Haven’t we agreed that here we do not have a real state?’

(41) Zar ti dosega navistina ne seti deka sum pijan? (M, KČ)
‘Really, haven’t you yet noticed that I am drunk?’

5.4 *Zar* in Marginal Functions

Besides the three identified types of *zar*-questions in both languages, we have encountered instances of *zar* in non-contradiction contexts in Serbian works from the first half of the 20th century, which were not included in the sample. In these particular examples *zar* serves as a discourse marker of assertiveness, isofunctional with the Macedonian *neli*.¹⁵

(42) Otišla, bogami efendija, ima dva dana [...] Zapazili, **zar**, gdje se vrzete oko kuce, a mnogo vas je, pa vele da sakrijemo djevojku. (S, SA)¹⁶
‘She left, Efendi, two das ago... They noticed you, didn’t they, while you were hanging around the house, and you were a big bunch, so they said let’s hide the girl.’

The final non-interrogative *zar* has fallen out of use in Macedonian and Serbian. We found only one Serbian example (43) but several *zer* in Macedonian (44) in works written in the 20-ies of the last century. It can be best translated as ‘really’, a modal particle that strengthens the assertiveness of the preceding statement.

(43) Usredini crkvi sam, usredini gladi sam, odlazi od mene, ostavi me, našto **zar**. (S, SA)¹⁷
‘I am in the middle of the church, in the middle of hunger, leave me, really.’

(44) Ovoj čoeek bre? – Ete, ovoj e, **zer**.¹⁸
‘This man, hey? – Yes, that’s him, really.’

¹⁵ See Mitkovska, Bužarovska (forthcoming) about *neli* as a discourse marker.

¹⁶ I. Andrić, *Đerzelez in Sarajevo* (1920).

¹⁷ R. Petrović, *The Impossible Ploughman* (1921).

¹⁸ V. Černodrinski. *Makedonska krvava svadba* (1928).

In sum, the previous discussion shows that *zar*-questions in Macedonian and Serbian are used in similar discourse functions. However, *zar* in Serbian has a wider distribution as it occurs in non-contradiction contexts to affirm something obvious (see 22), a function usually performed by *neli* in Macedonian.

6 Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that *zar*-questions in Macedonian and Serbian share nearly identical discourse-pragmatic functions. We have identified three discourse types of *zar*-questions: rhetorical, assertive, and biased. Biased questions exhibit a more inquisitive nature compared to the assertiveness of rhetorical and assertive questions. The nuanced pragmatic differences between these two types stem from the degree of epistemic conflict. The most widespread type, rhetorical, typically conveys emotionally charged denials or contradictions hence serving as effective persuasion strategies. These questions hinge on a strong epistemic conflict between the prior belief and the new situation. Emphasizing both facets of this conflict generates emphatic effects. Conversely, assertive questions foreground a non-emphatic commitment to the previous belief, leading to a lower degree of epistemic conflict reflected in lower affectivity. Both rhetorical and assertive *zar*-questions differ from their inquisitive counterparts characterized by a low degree of assertiveness. As expected, the three discourse types form a functional continuum based on the degree of assertiveness: biased questions border on assertive ones, which, in turn, transition into rhetorical questions. In some AQs, *zar* functions similarly to a pragmatic marker, reinforcing the veracity of the assertion.

The similar functional distribution of *zar*-questions in the two languages suggests a convergent evolution, likely influenced by language contact. In the first half of the 20th century, the Serbian *zar* and the dialectal Macedonian *zer* were not firmly established sentence-initially in interrogative use. However, in all the examined Macedonian works, *zar* (not *zer*) is consistently used. It is reasonable to assume that language contact may have driven the spread of *zar* at the expense of *zer*. While *zar* may have historically undergone distinct developments in the two languages, interlanguage contact appears to have molded it into an epistemic marker that challenges the truth of the proposition encoded in the question. This contact has resulted in a striking similarity in the functional distribution of *zar*-questions in the two languages.

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The Integration of Romanian Loan Verbs in a Bulgarian Dialect of Romania

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Abstract This study explores the borrowing of verbs in the Bulgarian dialect of Brănești in Romania and aims to investigate how bilingual speakers integrated Romanian loan verbs and why they adopted such integration strategies based on quantitative and contrastive analyses. For this purpose, the original colloquial data collected by the author in the 2010s, which included 93 Romanian loan verbs, are used. I argue that bilingual speakers choose either a direct or indirect insertion strategy, and in the latter case, they utilize the borrowed morpheme -'askǎ as an integration marker. The process is motivated by formal similarities and productivity.

Keywords Loan Verb. Morphological Integration. Language Contact. Bulgarian. Romanian.

Summary 1. Introduction. – 2. Previous Studies. – 2.1. Bulgarian Dialects in Romania. – 2.2. Typological Viewpoint. – 3. Analysis of Loan Verbs from Romanian. – 3.1. Direct Insertion. – 3.2. Indirect Insertion. – 3.3. The Loan Verbs with -'askǎ. – 3.4. Why -'askǎ and not -'azǎ?. – 3.5. -'askǎ as a Loan Verb Integration Marker. – 4. Conclusion.



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1 Introduction

This study investigated the borrowing of verbs in a bilingual context, specifically in the language of a Bulgarian minority in Romania, within the framework of typological studies on borrowings in the language contact situation.¹

This study provides a detailed description and analysis of Romanian loan verbs in the Bulgarian dialect and discusses the process and mechanism of verb borrowing in the context of bilingualism. Original oral data collected during the author's visits to the village in the 2010s were used for analysis. The author conducted interviews with 14 bilingual speakers in a free conversation style.

The study focuses on the Bulgarian dialect of Brănești (Ilfov County), located in the east adjacent to Bucharest. The village was first inhabited by Bulgarian immigrants from the Silistra region of north-eastern Bulgaria (cf. Mladenov 1993, 34, etc.). However, the language shift has progressed to such a significant extent that there are few remaining bilingual elderly today (cf. Sugai 2021a). Most bilingual speakers whom the author interviewed were born in the 1930s and over 80 years old at the time of the author's field research. The oldest speaker among them was born in 1925 and the youngest in 1955.

2 Previous Studies

2.1 Bulgarian Dialects in Romania

Mladenov (1993, 404-8), who discussed the effect of language contact in the Bulgarian dialects of Romania in general, referred to verbal borrowing as well, providing a list of 63 Romanian loan verbs in the Bulgarian dialects of Romania. Although he analyzed the adaptation of Romanian loan nouns in the Bulgarian morphological system, he did not conduct a detailed analysis of the loan verbs from this perspective (Mladenov 1993, 372-80).

The issue concerning the adaptation of loan verbs from Romanian in the Brănești dialect was referred to partially in the author's earlier work dedicated to contact-induced borrowing in the Brănești dialect in general (Sugai 2021b, 59-61). However, only several loan verbs were examined. Thus, it hardly revealed the complete mechanism of

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the integration process without reaching the generalization of the borrowing strategy adopted in the dialect.

Therefore, in this study, I thoroughly investigated audio data that included interviews with 14 bilingual speakers recorded during the author's fieldwork in the 2010s. I compiled a database containing 93 Romanian loan verbs in total to examine the issue on a larger scale with abundant loan verbs and reconsider the issue within the typological studies of verbal borrowing in a language contact situation.

2.2 Typological Viewpoint

Typological studies on verbal borrowing have identified four types of loan verb integration, as in (1).

- (1) Types of loan verb integration (Matras 2009, 176)
 - a. No modification of the original form of the verb ('direct insertion')
 - b. Morphological modification of the original form of the verb ('indirect insertion')
 - c. Insertion of the original form of the verb into a compound construction where it is accompanied by an inherited verb ('light verb')
 - d. Import of the original verb along with its original inflection ('paradigm transfer')

Loan verbs may or may not be modified, or even the original inflection can be transferred altogether when integrated into a recipient language. Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2008) suggest the Loan Verb Integration Hierarchy, as in (2).

- (2) Loan Verb Integration Hierarchy (Wichmann, Wohlgemuth 2008, 108)
light verb strategy < indirect insertion < direct insertion < paradigm transfer

This hierarchy suggests that the degree of integration is the lowest for the light verb strategy and the highest for the paradigm transfer. The indirect insertion shows a somewhat higher degree of integration than the light verb strategy because only an additional suffix is required to integrate a loan verb into the recipient language's verbal morphology. The direct insertion is higher than the indirect one as the loan verb is integrated directly into the recipient language's grammar without any morphological process. As Matras (2009, 176-7) argued, the choice of form that is replicated from the donor language also differs among languages; this can be a verbal root or a default form such as an infinitive or a 3sg finite form.

Therefore, which strategy and form for replication are selected by the speakers and what motivated them to choose that strategy is considered when investigating the process of verbal borrowing in the Bulgarian dialect.

3 Analysis of Loan Verbs from Romanian

3.1 Direct Insertion

Loan verbs from Romanian in the dialect have a Bulgarian inflectional suffix, i.e. the stems of the loan verbs are of Romanian origin. However, the inflectional suffix attached to them is of Bulgarian origin.

- (3) a. Še gu **sună-š** săs telefonu?
FUT he.ACC call-PRS.2SG with telephone.DEF
'Are you going to call him on the phone?'
(< Ro. **a suna** 'to call')
- b. Ni moe dă **respiră-m**.
NEG can SMP breathe-PRS.1SG
'I cannot breathe.'
(< Ro. **a respira** 'to breathe')

The inflectional suffix adopted is that of the Bulgarian verbs of the third inflection class. Therefore, Romanian loan verbs have the following paradigm in the indicative present: *sună-m*, *sună-š*, *sună-ø*, *sună-mi*, *sună-ti*, *sună-t*. This is a direct insertion, as no additional suffix is required to be inflected in the recipient language.

As for the form adopted for the stem, it coincides with the 3 SG/PL finite form in the indicative present of the Romanian verbs of the first inflection class (*sună* [IND.PRES.3SG/PL] < *a suna* [INF]). This 3 SG/PL inflectional suffix *-ă* formally coincides with the thematic vowel of the third inflection class in Bulgarian because the northeastern Bulgarian dialect of Brănești is characteristic of vowel reduction. Therefore, the thematic vowel /a/ is reduced to sound like [ă], which perfectly fits with the 3 SG/PL inflectional suffix of the Romanian verbs of the first inflection class *-ă*. Even though the morphological meaning differs between them (one is an inflectional suffix, whereas the other is a thematic vowel), the bilingual speakers of the Brănești dialect must have found similarities in both forms. As a result, they reinterpreted the Romanian finite form, including the ending *-ă*, as a stem of the Bulgarian third inflection class verb stem (Sugai 2021b, 60-1).

- (4) Reinterpretation process
Ro. **sun-ă** [IND.PRS.3SG] > Br. **sună-** [default verb stem]

It should also be noted that this verb stem is applicable to any finite form in the Brănești dialect in the same way as the verb stem of the Bulgarian third inflection class can take any inflectional suffixes. In

other words, this verb stem derived from Romanian loan words seems to function as a default stem in the dialect.

I argued in my previous paper (Sugai 2021b) that the vowel *ă* is relevant to this reinterpretation process. This is supported by the fact that bilingual speakers adopt Romanian finite forms that end in *-ă* regardless of their grammatical meaning. Romanian verbs of the third inflection class take *-e* as an ending of 3 SG in the indicative mood, but *-ă* as an ending of 3 SG/PL in the subjunctive mood. When bilingual speakers replicate verb stems from the Romanian third inflection class verbs, they select the finite form in the subjunctive, as in (6).

- (5) *Petr'akă-wmi* ube.
spend-**IMPF.1PL** good
'We spent a good time.'
- (6) Ro. *petreac-ă* [**SBJV.PRS.3SG/PL**] > Br. *petr'akă-* [default verb stem]
(cf. Ro. *petrec-e* [**IND.PRS.3SG**])

The verb stem *petr'akă-* can be derived only from the 3SG/PL finite form in the subjunctive for having a vowel alternation in the root (e > ea) that is reflected in the replicated form in the dialect (*-rea-* > *-r'a-*), as in (6). The selection of subjunctive finite forms instead of indicative ones is made based on the formal similarity, i.e. they take the inflectional suffix *-ă* that formally fits the thematic vowel of third inflection class verbs in Bulgarian (Sugai 2021b, 61).

Therefore, it can be assumed that the direct insertion is enabled by the identification process by bilingual speakers based on the formal similarity between the two different morphemes, i.e. the Romanian inflectional ending *ă* and the Bulgarian thematic vowel *a*. Also, the frequently observed direct insertion shows the high degree of integrity of the loan verbs in the Bulgarian morphological system.

3.2 Indirect Insertion

Furthermore, the Brănești dialect may resort to the indirect insertion strategy as well. Indeed, the loan verbs from Romanian may take the additional imperfective suffix *-wă* (<*-va*) when they are adopted in the Brănești dialect.

- (7) As *pričap-wă-m* dă šijă.
I-**NOM** understand-**IPFV-PRS.1SG** SMP sew
'I can sew.'
(< Ro. a pricepe 'to understand')
- (8) Ro. priceapă [**SUB.PRS.3.SG/PL**] > Br. *pričapă-* [default verbal stem]

> *pričap-wă*- [verb stem with imperfective suffix]
(cf. pricepe [IND.PRS.3.SG] < a pricepe [INF])²

However, the indirect insertion strategy with the help of *-wă* is somewhat restricted in number. This is probably due to the fact that the suffix *-wă* is not a pure verbalizing derivational affix but a productive imperfective suffix. The formation of the imperfective verb with the help of the suffix *-wă* is characteristic of Bulgarian verbs in general (e.g. *opita*- > *opit-va*-).³ Thus, it is possible to assume that the suffix *-wă* is adopted only when its use is appropriate from a semantic point of view. This suggests that the indirect insertion strategy seems to be optional and generally yields to the direct insertion strategy in this specific dialect.

3.3 The Loan Verbs with *-'askă*

There are a series of Romanian loan verbs whose stems end in *-'askă*, as in (9).

- (9) a. As s kăko dă tă **serv'askă-m?**
I-NOM with what SMP you.ACC serve-PRS.1SG
'What can I serve you (to eat)?'
(< Ro. a servi, -esc⁴ 'to serve')
- b. Nij sim dători dă stuvim dă **prim'askă-mi**
we are obliged SMP stay SMP receive-PRS.1PL
kotu ni dăde gospod'.
what us give Lord
'We ought to stay so that we receive what the Lord would give us.'
(< Ro. a primi, -esc 'to receive')

The verbal stem with *-'askă* seems to have been replicated on the model of the finite form in the subjunctive present of Romanian fourth inflection class verbs that have an additional suffix *-esc* when conjugated. The additional suffix *-esc* in Romanian has two other allomorphs *-eșt-* and *-easc-* in accordance with the following vowel. While the former is realized when followed by such endings as *-i* and *-e*, the latter

² Again, the default verbal stem *pričapă-* is derived from the subjunctive but not indicative as the vowel alternation in Romanian (*-ce-* > *-cea-*) is reflected in the replicated form.

³ The same derivational process is also applied to loan verbs (e.g. *organizira-* > *organizir-va-*), although in most cases, it is still on the border of the norms (cf. Nicolova 2008, 280).

⁴ As for the Romanian verbs that may take additional suffix in conjugation, the type of suffix (either *-esc* or *-ez*) is indicated after the infinitive form.

is conditioned only by the ending -ă, which is the ending of 3 SG/PL in the subjunctive present for the fourth inflection class in Romanian.

It can thus be assumed that the model for replication is a 3SG/PL finite form of the subjunctive present that ends in -ească. Note the formal similarity invited by the ending -ă to understand why the bilingual speakers selected the 3 SG/PL finite form of subjunctive present. They seem to have identified the finite form *servească* with a verbal stem of the third inflection class that involves the thematic vowel /a/.

- (10) Ro. *servească*-ă [SBJV.PRS.3SG/PL] > Br. *serv'askă*- [default verbal stem]

Therefore, it seems to be another case of the direct insertion strategy. Furthermore, as pointed out by Sugai (2021b), this verb suffix is observed not only in the loan verbs that have the equivalent suffix in Romanian -esc, as discussed earlier, but also in those that have another suffix -ez.

- (11) a. Mi kază doktoru, Mămaie, ni poate să tă
I.DAT told doctor.DEF grandma NEG can SMP you.ACC
uper'askă-m."
operate-SUF-PRS.1SG
'The doctor told me "Grandma, I can't perform an operation on you."
(< Ro. a opera, -ez 'to operate')
- b. Pă kogă să vizit'askă-š?
ACC whom SMP visit-SUF-PRS.2SG
'Who are you going to visit?'
(< Ro. a vizita, -ez 'to visit')

What is significant here is that, although the Romanian verbs of the first inflection class with the suffix -ez do not have a form -ească in the paradigm, the equivalent form -'askă is observed for those loan verbs. For example, the default verb form as *uper'askă*- in (11) cannot be found in the paradigm of the equivalent Romanian verb *a opera* (**operească*). Therefore, it is evident that -'askă can be applied even to the Romanian verbs that do not take such a finite form as -ească, namely those with -ez (-ează) (Sugai 2021b, 60-1). The quantitative analysis revealed that all 28 Romanian loan verbs with -ez were replicated with the suffix -'askă in our database. It also turned out that this suffix -'askă cannot be applied to those Romanian verbs that do not require any suffixes.⁵

It is thus suggested that -'askă in the Brănești dialect has been recognized by bilingual speakers as an invariant independent suffix

⁵ Compare this to the case with French loan verbs in Dutch. The -er suffix seems to have been generalized as the marker used exclusively for loan verbs from French, even

rather than an inseparable part of the verb stem (cf. Sugai 2021b). This is probably induced, first of all, by the high degree of bilingualism spread among the speakers, which enabled them to correctly analyze the morphological structure of both languages. Also, the morphological structures that are formally quite similar to one another, as in (12), should have promoted this process.

(12)	stem	-suffix	-ending (prs.1sg)
	Bg.	STEM	-va -m
	Br.	STEM	-’askă -m

It is possible to assume that the speakers identified the borrowed suffix *-’askă* with the native verbal suffixes. However, the stem with the borrowed suffix *-’askă* may have a further derivational process with the imperfective suffix *-wă*, as in (13), and it is observed for loan verbs of both inflection classes with *-ez* and *-esc* in Romanian, as in (14) and (15).

- (13) Gi *film-’ask-wă-t* săz aparati i
 they.ACC film-SUF-IPF-PRS.3PL with cameras and
puz-’ask-wă-t...
 take_pictures-SUF-IPF-PRS.3PL
 ‘They film them [=people in disguise], take pictures...’
 (< Ro. a filma, -ez ‘to film’), (< Ro. a poza, -ez ‘to take pictures’)

- (14) The Romanian first inflection class with *-ez*
- redžistr-’askă- redžistr-’ask-wă- (< Ro. a înregistra, -ez ‘to record’)
 - plant-’askă- plant-’ask-wă- (< Ro. a planta, -ez ‘to plant’)
 - ămfi-jaskă- ămfi-jask-wă- (< Ro. a înfia, -ez ‘to adopt’)
- (15) The Romanian fourth inflection class with *-esc*
- prim-’askă- prim-’ask-wă- (< Ro. a primi, -esc ‘to receive’)
 - ăngriž-askă- ăngriž-ask-wă- (< Ro. a îngriji, -esc ‘to take care’)
 - drăku-jaskă- drăku-jask-wă- (< Ro. a drăcui, -esc ‘to curse’)

This suggests the specific role of the suffix *-’askă* in accommodating loan verbs. We shall return to this issue later in this paper.

3.4 Why *-’askă* and not *-’ază*?

The loan verbs of Romanian that take the suffix *-ez* have a finite form that ends in *-’ază*. This form also satisfies the requirement for formal

if the original form does not contain *-er* but *-ir* (cf. Muysken 2000, 191-2).

similarity because it ends in -ă. However, why do bilingual speakers use the suffix -'askă instead of -'ază?

One of the two possible reasons for this choice is a productive derivational suffix -ka that carries a diminutive meaning in Bulgarian (e.g. *gleda* > *gled-ka*-, *zvăn* > *zvăn-ka*-) (cf. Nicolova 2008, 249; Maslov 1981, 108). The productivity of the suffix -ka likely caused the generalization of the suffix -'askă rather than the other one. There are also verbs whose stem ends in -za (e.g. *vliza-m*, etc.), but no verbal derivational suffixes formally correspond to -za. This is probably why -'ază was not involved in the adaptation of Romanian loan verbs in the dialect. Furthermore, in Bulgarian, there are generally fewer verbs that end in -za compared to those that end in -ka. In the reverse dictionary of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Murdarov et al. 2011), there are only 24 verbs with -za compared with 740 verbs with -ka. It is thus suggested that the verb stem with -ka is much more familiar to Bulgarian speakers. Thus, it is more likely to be acceptable by the bilingual speakers as a general form, which could be related to the choice of -'askă instead of -'ază as well.

The other possible reason may be related to the productivity of Romanian verbs with -esc. Avram (2001, 200-1) reported that among the fourth inflection class verbs, the number of verbs with the suffix -esc is ten times more than that of verbs without it. Furthermore, there are differences in productivity between the verbs with -ez and those with -esc. She pointed out a tendency of limitation of -ez, but of extension of -esc (Avram 2001, 201).⁶ This means that the verbs with -esc are much more productive than those with -ez. Therefore, it is possible to assume that -esc (-easc) is more acceptable for bilingual speakers to borrow and divert it for the adaptation suffix.

In summary, the choice of -'askă instead of -'ază was probably motivated by the formal similarity with the Bulgarian productive verbal derivational suffix -ka and the productivity of Romanian verbs with -esc. These factors likely caused bilingual speakers to choose and generalize the suffix -'askă as an integrational verbal suffix applied for Romanian verbs that require additional suffixes in conjugation.

3.5 -'askă as a Loan Verb Integration Marker

In our data, there are no loan verbs with loan suffixes such as -ira and -izira, which are widespread in the other varieties of Bulgarian (including the standard language). Instead, in the Brănești dialect, the suffix

⁶ The Romanian fourth inflection class with -esc used to be the most productive, incorporating most of the loan verbs, until the 19th century. However, it seems to be rather -ez that is the most productive in the contemporary Romanian. (cf. Nedelcu 2013, 20-1)

-*askă* borrowed from Romanian seems to have become equivalent to those suffixes, being reserved exclusively for Romanian loan verbs.

- (16) a. Br. *angaž-askă-* < Ro. *a angaj-a, -ez*
Bg. *angaž-ira-* < G. *angagier-en*
b. Br. *uper-'askă-* < Ro. *a oper-a, -ez*
Bg. *oper-ira-* < G. *operier-en*

In the list of Romanian loan verbs of Mladenov (1993, 404-8), there are only three verbs that have the same suffix -*askă* (*văn-'askă-, pregăt-'askă-, logod-'askă-*), two of which are present in our database as well (*văn-'askă-, pregăt-'askă-*).⁷ In contrast, there are more examples with the suffix -*isa* and the combination with the imperfective suffix -*is-va*, which indicates that -*isa* / -*osa* is the productive suffix in adapting loan verbs from Romanian.⁸

In our database of the Brănești dialect, however, there are no examples of this type of adaptation suffix. The suffix -*askă* is the one that takes over the role without permitting other suffixes to be applied. Below is a table of comparisons.

Table 1 Comparison of the suffixes applied to loan verbs from Romanian

Bg Dialects of Romania in general (Mladenov 1993, 404-8)	Bg Dialect of Brănești (Our Database)	Romanian
potriv- is-va- / potriv- isa-	potriv-' askă-	< a potrivi, -esc'to equate'
prim- is-va- / prim- isa-	prim-' askă-	< a primi, -esc'to receive'
să pomen- is-vă- / pomen- isă-	să pumen-' askă-	< a se pomeni, -esc'to find oneself'
pregăt- is-va- / pregăt-' askă-	prigăt-' askă-	< a pregăti, -esc'to prepare'
vyn- os-va- / vãn-' askă-	vãn-' askă-	< a vâna, -ez'to hunt'
să num- is-vă-	să num-' askă-	< a se numi, -esc'to be named'
tenku- is-vă- / tenk- osa-	tenkui-' askă-	< a tencui, -esc'to plaster'
serv- isa-	serv-' askă-	< a servi, -esc'to serve'
zăpăč- isă-	zăpăč-' askă-	< a zăpăci, -esc'to flurry'
puvest- ysă-	puvest-' askă-	< a povesti, -esc'to tell'
să libera- să-	să liber-' askă-	< a se libera, -ez'to liberate'

⁷ Interestingly, those with the suffix -*askă*, attested in Mladenov's list, are from Ciocănești, where the same type of northeastern Bulgarian dialect as in Brănești is spoken.

⁸ I suppose that the productivity of the suffix -*isa-* was invited by the formal similarity between the infinitival suffix of the Romanian fourth inflection class -*i* and the initial vowel of the suffix -*isa*, although a more detailed analysis would be necessary in this regard.

The morphological structure of both types of suffixes is parallel, as can be seen in (17). The only difference between them is that the speakers of the Brănești dialect opted for the additional suffix borrowed from Romanian.

- (17) a. potriv-isa- potriv-is-va- (Mladenov 1993, 406)
 b. potriv-'askă- potriv-'ask-wă-

As it is well known, the morpheme *-s-* is originated in Greek (cf. Ase-nova 2002, 64-5; Mirčev 1963, 66, etc.). According to Maslov (1981, 106), at first, it was found in the loan verbs from Greek which seemingly had a verbalizing function (e.g. *zograf* 'icon-painter' > *zograf-isa-m* 'to paint an icon'). Now the suffixes containing the morpheme *-s-* such as *-osa-*, *-isa-*, *-'asa* are among the most productive denominal/verbalizing suffixes and are found not only in Greek loans but also in Bulgarian native words (e.g. *b'al* 'white' > *bel-osa-m* 'to whiten', etc.) (cf. Maslov 1981, 106; Mirčev 1963, 66).

As for the suffix *-'askă*, the original form of it in Romanian *-esc* was once an inchoative/ingressive suffix **-isk* or **-esc* that has lost its meaning in the contemporary Romance languages (cf. Maiden 2004, 2,8-9; Hall 1983, 49; Rosetti 1978, 151, etc.), including Romanian (cf. Nedelcu 2013, 19). It is this fourth inflection class verb that "was the most productive, incorporating most of the loan verbs" until the 19th century (Nedelcu 2013, 21). As Wichmann and Wohlgemuth (2008, 112) pointed out, "affixes which are used in a particular language to accommodate loan verbs, following the indirect insertion strategy, may be borrowed by another language where they continue to be used to accommodate new loan verbs." It is thus suggested that the suffix *-esc*, which used to function as a suffix that accommodated loan verbs in Romanian, was transferred to the Brănești Bulgarian dialect, in which it functions the same way: now it incorporates Romanian loan verbs into the Bulgarian dialect.

Thus, it is evident that the suffix *-'askă* is parallel with the suffix *-isa* not only in its morphological structure but also in the function of incorporating loan verbs.

Therefore, I would argue that the suffix *-'askă* borrowed from Romanian has become a suffix exclusively used to adapt Romanian verbs with additional suffixes in conjugation. Just as the suffix *-ira* or *-isa* is productively applied to loan verbs in the other varieties of Bulgarian, the borrowed suffix *-'askă* in the Brănești dialect has been generalized as a special suffix used to adapt loan verbs from Romanian.

4 Conclusion

In this study, I attempted to reveal the adaptation strategies that the bilingual speakers of the Brănești dialect take when they borrow Romanian verbs.

Based on what we have seen, it is the **direct insertion strategy** that the speakers of the Bulgarian dialect typically resort to. However, the **indirect insertion strategy** is also observed especially for the loan verbs, originating in those inflecting with suffixes *-ez* or *-esc* in Romanian. In both cases, the Romanian inflectional suffix *-ă* is the key morpheme to the promotion of integrating the Romanian loan verbs as the Bulgarian third inflectional class verbs that have the thematic vowel *-a*. Furthermore, the indirect insertion strategy with *-askă* is the only strategy that could be adopted for the Romanian verbs with *-ez* or *-esc*, even excluding other suffixes that could facilitate the integration of the loan verbs. Therefore, the suffix *-askă* seems to have become a loan verb marker that functions solely as an integrational suffix that accommodates Romanian loan verbs with additional suffix in conjugation.

I was unable to scrutinize some issues. One of them is about non-finite forms derived from Romanian loan verbs. It seems that the past passive participles from Romanian loan verbs coincide with the corresponding form in Romanian (Br. *angažat* / Ro. *angajat*, Br. *tencuit* / Ro. *tencuit*, etc.). The formal similarity is assumed to be relevant here, but this requires further investigation. Finally, it is interesting that the speakers of the Brănești dialect opted for the suffix *-askă* borrowed from Romanian rather than the suffix *-isa* borrowed originally from Greek. To explore the reasons behind it will be one of my future tasks.

List of Abbreviations

Bg.	Bulgarian
Br.	Brănești Bulgarian dialect
G.	German
IMPF	imperfect (tense)
IPF	imperfective suffix
Ro.	Romanian
SMP	subordinating modal particle
SUF	suffix

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The Role of the Particle *po-* in the Comparison of Adjectives in Štokavian Dialects

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Abstract The use of the particle *po-* with adjectives in positive, comparative, or even superlative forms is fairly common in Slavic languages. It is present in Slovak, Czech, and Russian, as well as in Macedonian and Bulgarian. In the Štokavian dialects, the usage of the particle *po-* encompasses a wide range of meanings. This article presents all the variants of the usage of the particle *po-* in these dialects, aiming to establish the boundary between dialects that use this particle and those that do not. A substantial effort was made to determine if there is any parallel between the shift from synthetic to analytic comparison in these dialects.

Keywords Adjective gradability. Analytic comparison. Synthetic comparison. Serbo-Croatian language. Štokavian dialects. Balkan linguistic.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Comparison and its degrees. – 3 The morpheme *po-*. – 4 The morpheme *po-* in the Štokavian dialects. – 5 Conclusion



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1 Introduction

The use of the morpheme *po-* with adjectives (and adverbs) in either positive or comparative or even superlative form is fairly well present in Slavic languages. In Slovak, for example, it is mostly used with terms for colors, carrying the meaning 'less' or 'somewhat' e.g. *pob-elavý* 'whitish, somewhat white', while in Czech it can either modify the meaning similar to the one in Slovak e.g. *pobělavý* 'whitish, somewhat white', or it can be used with a comparative degree, carrying the meaning 'less, slightly less' e.g. *postarší člověk* 'slightly less old man'. On the other hand, in Russian, it carries the meaning 'more, even, slightly more, even more', e.g. *po-nteresnee* 'even more-interesting.N.SG.COM' 'even more interesting', *po-staršaja* 'even more.old.F.SG.COMP' 'even older'. At the very south of the territory of Slavic languages, i.e. in the Macedonian and Bulgarian languages, the usage of the morpheme *po-* is the only way of creating a comparative degree of adjectives (and adverbs), although there are some exceptions (see chapter 4.3).

In this paper, we examine the morpheme *po-* in the Štokavian dialects¹. The paper is divided into three chapters. The first one discusses gradation and the ways languages form comparative degrees. The second one discusses the etymology of the morpheme *po-* and its status within parts of speech. In the third part, we will present the situation in the Štokavian dialects which will help us establish the borders of the phenomenon within the territory of the Central South Slavic language (CSS)². We will also see its relation to the situation in Macedonian and Bulgarian languages, trying to find possible connections between these languages and the adjacent dialects of the Central South Slavic language. The result of this research will also answer a question whether the shift from synthetic to analytic comparison is linked to the other changes which the Prizren-Timok dialect experienced.

Dialectal material will be taken from papers and monographs dealing with different varieties of the Štokavian dialects. The collected material spans over 100 years, so it is possible that some varieties

1 We are aware that the most common spelling of the name of this dialect is Shtokavian, and Chakavian instead of Čakavian, but for the sake of consistency of the text, the forms with diacritics will be used.

2 Even though we are completely aware that the more common terms are Serbo-Croatian language or BCMS, in this article we will use the term Central South Slavic language. The first two terms carry sociolinguistic meaning. We consider the term Serbo-Croatian somewhat outdated, since this standard language split into four. The term BCMS refers only to standard varieties of the ex-Serbo-Croatian language, i.e. Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. On the other hand, Central South Slavic geographically defines the territory between Slovenian to the west and Macedonian and Bulgarian to the south and east, thus including all the dialects spoken on the territory, and not only the dialect(s) which the standard languages were based on, and it does not carry the political burden, unlike some of the other terms.

changed in form since then, but it is unlikely that the change was radical. Also, not every possible local variety was covered and because of that some results may vary.

2 Comparison and its degrees

Adjective comparison is a linguistic manifestation of a cognitive process in which two or more things are compared by either quality or quantity. The relation can either be a similarity or a difference between those entities about a more or less specific aspect of quality (de Kreij 2021, 19-20). In the Central South Slavic, only descriptive adjectives can be graded.

Every comparison structure has four constituents that make the expression complete. These are:

- a. comparee, that is, compared entity;
- b. standard of comparison, that is, the entity which the comparee is compared to;
- c. aspect of comparison, that is, the predicate denoting the property that comparee and standard share;
- d. marker of standard, that is, the element that relates comparee to the standard and identifies the construction as a comparison (de Kreij 2021, 20).

To put it in perspective, in the sentence 'My house is bigger than Peter's' *My house* is a comparee, *is bigger* is an aspect, *than* is a marker, and *Peter's* is a standard of comparison.

The property and the relationship between the two compared entities can vary, and accordingly, the degree of comparison can also vary, but these degrees can be summarized in four categories:

- a. positive
- b. equative
- c. comparative
- d. superlative.

Even though most classical grammars describe *positive* as a first (or neutral) degree of the adjective gradation (cf. Ultan 1972, 121), it too can be used for gradation. The main difference between positive on the one hand and equative, comparative and superlative degrees on the other is the fact that positive degrees are not marked most of the time, whereas the remaining three are (Ultan 1972, 121). However, the lack of morphological or lexical markedness is, in this case, substituted by the means of syntax. In these cases, it can bear the meaning of comparative as is shown by example 1 from the Serbian language:

- (1) *Ti si dobar u poređenju*
2.SG.NOM be.2.SG.PRES good.M.SG.NOM in comparison.N.SG.LOC
s njim.
with 3.M.SG.INST
'You are good in comparison to him' = 'You are better than him'.

Because of that, we can say that positive is also a degree of comparison, as long as it includes all four of the aforementioned constituents of the comparison structure.

The *equative* degree includes situations when both the comparee and the standard of comparison obtain a property to the same extent (de Kreij 2021, 20) (example 2):

- (2) *Ova kuća je velika kao tvoja.*
this.F.SG.NOM house.F.SG.NOM be.3.SG.PRES big.F.SG.NOM as yours.F.SG.NOM
'This house is as big as yours'.

The *comparative* degree marks relative qualitative inequality between subjects of comparison. This means that the property of the comparee is inferior or superior to the standard. In this case, the standard of comparison does not include all the members of the group comparee belongs to (Ultan 1972, 123) (example 3):

- (3) *Moja kuća je veća*
my.F.SG.NOM house.F.SG.NOM be.3.SG.PRES bigger.F.SG.COMP.NOM
od tvoje.
than yours.F.SG.NOM
'My house is bigger than yours'.

The *superlative* degree indicates absolute inequality between the subjects of comparison. In this case, the property of comparee is inferior or superior to the standard, but the standard includes all the members of the group comparee belongs to (Ultan 1972, 124) (example 4):

- (4) *Moja kuća je najveća od svih*
my.F.SG.NOM house.F.SG.NOM be.3.SG.PRES big.F.SG.SUP.NOM of all.F.PL.GEN
u ulici.
in street.F.SG.LOC
'My house is the biggest of all in the street'.

As we can see, qualitative disparity is common for the two latter degrees of comparison. Both constructions represent binary comparisons, and the difference between them lies in the fact that the comparative is explicit while the superlative is implicit. So, semantically, comparatives and superlatives are slightly different aspects of the

same concept (Ullmann 1972, 124). That is why there is often partial or even total formal uniformity of degree and/or standard markers in these constructions. One of the languages that show this phenomenon is Albanian, where the distinction between comparative and superlative is expressed only by a marker (examples 5 and 6):

- (5) *Petriti* *është* *më* *i* *vjetër*
 Petrit.M.SG.DEF.NOM be.3.SG.PRES more.COMP.PTCP ART.M.SG.NOM old
se *unë*
 than 1.SG.NOM
 ‘Petrit is older than me’.
- (6) *Petriti* *është* *më* *i* *vjetër*
 Petrit.M.SG.DEF.NOM be.3.SG.PRES more.COMP.PTCP ART.M.SG.NOM old
në fshatin *tonë*³.
 in village.M.SG.ACC our.M.SG.ACC
 ‘Petrit is older (= the oldest) in our village’.

Similarly, in other Indo-European languages, e.g. all Romance languages, the difference between comparative and superlative is expressed rather partially: the superlative differs from the comparative in the use of the definite article (with the exception of some adjectives): *fre plus beau* : *le plus beau*, *por mais lindo* : *o mais lindo*, *rom mai frumos* : *cel mai frumos* ‘more beautiful : the most beautiful’.

There is no language unable to express comparison, but the means every one of them uses may vary. According to the means the languages use to construct comparative, they can be categorized into four main groups:

1. comparative without a marker – instead of using a marker, in these languages, the comparison is made by putting two positive adjectives in the juxtaposition with antonymic meaning: A (is) small, B (is) big = A is smaller than B. This type of comparison is common among isolating languages (Lehmann, Cuzzolin, 2004, 1215);
2. optional lexical morpheme – in this type, the adjective has no marker of comparison, while the standard often occurs in non-nominative cases; the most common is genitive, ablative or dative. This type is the most common among agglutinative languages (Lehmann, Cuzzolin 2004, 1215);

³ Formal distinction between comparative and superlative can be reached by substantivization of an adjective, i.e. by attaching the nominal definite article to it: *Petriti është më i vjetri në fshatin tonë* (see Agalliu et al 2002).

3. the use of affix – these languages use different affixes to form comparative, and according to the type of affix, these languages can be separated into three subgroups:
 - 3.a languages that use the suffix – this is a common way of expressing the comparative degree of an adjective, for example in most of Slavic languages, where the suffix is derived from proto-Slavic suffixes *-ějъ or *-jъjъ for masculine, *-ějъši or *-jъši for feminine and *-ėje or *-je for neuter genders⁴,
 - 3.b languages that use circumfix – the use of circumfix is one of the ways of making comparison in Kartvelian languages. In Georgian, the circumfix u-...-es *lamezi* ‘beautiful’ *ulamezesi* ‘more beautiful’,
 - 3.c use of transfix – Semitic languages (mostly in Arabic), the root /CaCi:C/ switches to /aCCaC/ to denote the relative, which is used both as comparative and superlative /kabi:r/ : /akbar/ ‘big : bigger/the biggest’, /gami:l/ : /agmal/ ‘pretty : prettier/the prettiest’ (Lehmanni, Cuzzolin 2004, 1215-16).

As mentioned, some Indo-European languages have synthetical forms of degrees of comparison instead of affixes; the comparative form is constructed analytically, i.e. lexically, using the adverb ‘more’. The same thing is present among Semitic languages, e.g. Hebrew (see Amir Coffin, Bolozky 2005, 196-7) and Amharic (Leslau 1995, 783-96).

1. the use of verbs – the fourth group uses verbs as a marker of comparison and can be divided into two subgroups:
 - 1.a using the verb with the meaning ‘surpass’ or ‘overtake’
 - 1.b the parameter of comparison is the verb itself (Lehmanni, Cuzzolin 2004, 1217).

This type of comparison is present in languages in which adjectives fall into the verbal category, in contrast to Indo-European languages where adjectives are within the nominal one. The phenomenon is frequent among isolating languages or languages with a low degree of synthesis (Lehmann, Cuzzolin 2004, 1217).

Non-equative constructions are constructions that represent disparity between two or more compared things, and the comparison can go in two directions: comparison of majority or superiority means that the property of a comparee surpasses the property of a standard, while comparison of minority or inferiority means that property of a comparee falls behind the property of a standard (Treis 2018, 3).

⁴ The use of one of these two types of suffixes was determined by the accent type of a noun (see Šekli 2018, 67).

The cognitive point of view shows us that describing entities that are *larger* or *smaller* is the primary way of expression, in comparison to expressing things that are *less large* or *less small*, thus the comparison of superiority is more frequent than the comparison of inferiority (Lehmanni and Cuzzolin 2004, 1213). This may be the reason why there are languages that express the comparative degree of superiority with affixes, but there is no language which constructs a comparative degree of inferiority by the same means (Bobaljik 2012, 210).

As it will be shown in the next chapter, the morpheme *po-* can be used with all the degrees of disparity, i.e. comparative and superlative, but only as long as they represent the disparity of superiority and can also be used with a positive degree.

3 The morpheme *po-*

In the CSS, it could appear as:

1. preposition
 - 1.a with the accusative case bears the following meanings: the goal of the verb action – *Idem po vodu*. ‘I am going to take water’, duration – *Spava po ceo dan*. ‘He / She sleeps all day long.’, multiplicity or distributivity – *Po čitavi gradovi su ostajali bez struje*. ‘Whole cities were left without electricity.’
 - 1.b with the locative case bears the distributive meaning of place(s) where the verb expression takes the action – *Sede po sobama*. ‘They are sitting in rooms.’, family and other ties – *braća po majci* ‘brothers from the same mother, uterine/maternal half-brothers’, time right after the moment expressed with the noun in the locative case – *po ponoći* ‘(right) after midnight’, *po ponedjeljku* ‘(right) after Monday’ (cf. Vujančić et al. 2011, 438).
2. prefix
 - 2.a a noun with the prefix only partially fills the meaning – *pomajka* ‘step-mother’, *pobratim* ‘blood brother’, *posestrima* ‘blood sister’
 - 2.b with verbs, it bears the meaning of: the start of an action – *potrčati* ‘to start running’, completion of an action – *pokupovati* ‘to buy’, an action that lasted for just a short period of time – *poigrati se* ‘to play (for a while)’, *porazgovarati* ‘to talk, to discuss’, action carried out by multiple subjects – *posedati* ‘to sit’ (cf. Vujančić et al. 2011, 438-9);
 - 2.c with adjectives and adverbs, it bears the meaning which “moderates” the meaning of an adjective or an adverb – *podobar* ‘pretty good’, *poveliki* ‘pretty big’.

The latter is present in almost all Slavic languages with meaning that either moderates or enforces the original meaning of an adjective, and in some, like Ukrainian, it can be used only with the positive grade of an adjective, while in Russian it is used only with comparative, in some dialects of the CSS it can be used with positive, comparative and superlative degrees, while in Bulgarian and Macedonian, as well as some dialects of the CSS it is used to form the comparative degree (cf. Kopečný 1973, 187, Bezljaj 1995, 64, Anastasov et al. 1996, 394). In those idioms that allow the use of the *po-* with positive, comparative, and superlative degrees, it plays a role similar to that of the flat and sharp tones in the musical scale, filling the gaps between degrees (cf. Jović 1968, 115). Thus, it acts like a semi-degree, by either *almost* or *too*. So, depending on the dialect of the CSS, for example, *podobar* can mean either ‘almost / quite good’ (still not meeting the requirement of the established parameter of good) or ‘very good’ (but not enough to be called *better*). When it comes to the other parts of the West South Slavic subbranch of the South Slavic languages, nowadays it does not appear in any of Slovenian dialects, and as it seems, it is not present in Kajkavian and Čakavian dialects either (cf. Hraste 1940; Moskovljević 1950; Jedvaj 1956; Valenčič 2011; Malnar Jurišić 2017). Nevertheless, Slovenian-German Dictionary from the 19th century shows that this meaning existed in the Slovenian language, too: *III. praef. A) adv. in front of adjectives have moderate meaning: počrn blackish*⁵ (Pleteršnik 2010)⁶ In this usage, the particle *po-* appears in the Church Slavonic texts, i.e. *īīāīāōū* ‘richer’. This leads to the conclusion that the *po-* developed from the proto-Slavic **po*.

The suffix with almost the same meaning also exists in the Baltic part of the Balto-Slavic language group, where *pa-* is used to moderate the original meaning of a word, like in lat *pasarkans* ‘redish’ or lit *pājoudis* ‘blackish’, *pósūris* ‘salty-ish’ (Bezljaj 1995, 65).

According to the aforementioned, PSI **po* (and *po-*) / *pa-*⁷, lit *pa-*, are related to gre *πoτί*, ave *paīti*, Oldp *paity* (which all have the adverbial suffix **-ti-*), and probably alb *tosk pas*, geg *mbas* ‘after, behind’ < pie. **pa* ‘to, towards, at’ (Bezljaj 1995, 65). The development of the meaning ‘-ish, less, pretty’ of the morpheme *po-* out of the PIE **po* which had lative meaning, can be explained by the semantic shift, meaning that someone who is *podobar* or *povisok*, is not as tall as the

⁵ Orig. *III. praef. A) adv. pred prilogi v pomanjševalnem pomenu (poredkoma): počrn, schwärzlich [...]*

⁶ For the material from the other Slavic languages, and the different usage of the *po* see Kopečný 1973, 178-89.

⁷ PSI **pa-* is a product of the lengthening of the /o/ sound **po* > **pō* > **pa*, which has the meaning ‘weaker, worse, false’: hr. and sr. *patvōriti* ‘to forge, to make something fake’, *pārožak* ‘prong, tine’ (horn-like object) (Gluhak 1993, 490). While *po* can be either preposition or prefix, the *pa-* is only prefix (Skok 1972, 692).

the same meaning was original in the Slavic languages, too, while the relative meaning of the prefix *po-* is therefore secondary.

One of the first rules of the standard languages regarding declension is that the nominative case can't be used with prepositions. The same is applicable for the most of dialects of the CSS. Even though the dialects Belić is examining in his work have in fact reduced the number of cases, there are still non-nominative cases in which the preposition *po* would be used. Most often, it is the accusative case (Stanojević 1911, 389). On the other hand, the morpheme *po* acts indeed more as a prefix-like morpheme. Orthographically, it is written together with the adjective it stands with. Most of the time, in many of the dialects, it creates one phonetical word with the adjective it stands next to. Yet, despite that, it can sometimes have its own accent, and, more importantly, it can be separated from the adjective by other parts of speech (examples 7, 8 and 9):

- (7) *Pó* *ē* *lǝk* (Stevanović 1950, 116).
 more.PTCP.COMP be.3.SG.PRES light.M.SG.NOM
 ‘He is lighter.’
- (8) *Po* *ē* *tǝnko* (Stevanović 1950, 116).
 more.ptcp.comp be.3.SG.PRES thin.N.SG.NOM
 ‘It is thinner.’
- (9) *Pó* *mu* *ē* *dǝle* *dűćān* (Stevanović 1950, 116).
 more.PTCP.COM 3.SG.DAT be.3.SG down.ADV shop.M.SG.NOM
 ‘His shop is (more) down there.’

Besides that, it can modify the nouns and verbs as well, carrying the same meaning, i.e. 'more' (examples 10 and 11):

- (10) *pó* *davaš* (Belić 1905, 440);
 more.PTCP.COMP to give.2.SG.PRES
 'you give more'
- (11) *pó* *davo* *od* *Vuka* (Belić 1905, 440).
 more.PTCP.COMP devil.M.SG.NOM than Vuk.M.SG.NOM
 'more devil than Vuk' = 'more naughty than Vuk'

Aside from the previously mentioned, as we saw in the first chapter, creating comparative degree with an affix is already very rare and is chiefly characteristic of the Indo-European languages (at least of those that retained it), but neither among them nor among those that shifted from the synthetical to analytical means of expressing the comparison, there is or was evidence of the use of prefix for forming the comparative (cf. Keydana, Hock, Widmer et al. 2021). This would mean that the phenomenon of prefixation of an adjective for forming the comparative would occur only in Macedonian, Bulgarian, Prizren-Timok dialect and the adjacent local varieties of the Kosovo-Resava dialect, which is, in our opinion, very unlikely.

All of the presented examples speak in favor of the morpheme *po-* as a free particle rather than as an affix⁸, but all of the examples are from the old *Štokavian* dialects, i.e. Torlak (or Prizren-Timok) and some regional varieties of Kosovo-Resava, where in the former the synthetic comparison was completely replaced by the analytic one, with the exception of a few adjectives (See Belić 1905), and the morpheme *po-* took the role of the comparative marker, while in the latter, it has undergone the same change in regional varieties adjacent to the Prizren-Timok dialect. On the other hand, neo-*Štokavian* dialects, as well as some of the old-*Štokavian*, i.e. Zeta-South Sandžak dialect, still retain synthetic comparison and the morpheme *po-* is in a different context with sometimes different meanings.

4 The morpheme *po-* in the *Štokavian* dialects

The territory of the Central South Slavic is consisted of three dialects or dialect groups named by the interrogative pronoun *what*: Kajkavian 'kaj', Čakavian 'ča', Štokavian 'što (or šta)'. Since the Kajkavian and Čakavian dialects do not use the morpheme *po-* for any type of comparison (cf. Hraste 1940; Moskovljević 1950; Jedvaj

⁸ The similar fate occurred to the verb *to want* where the 3rd person present of the verb mac *će*, bul *уће*, alb *do*, 'will, shall' all of them developed from the 3rd person singular of the verb *to want*, but are not considered as a present form of the verb, but rather a particle that marks the future tense.



Figure 1
The map
of Štokavian dialects
(Lisac 2003, 160-1).

1956; Valenčić 2011; Malnar Jurišić 2017), we will focus solely on the Štokavian dialects.

The Eastern Herzegovinian dialect of the Štokavian dialectal group is also used as a basis for all of today's standard languages, or more precisely, the regional variety of Dubrovnik of the Eastern Herzegovinian dialect is the basis for the Bosnian, Croatian and Montenegrin standard languages, while Serbian has two standard varieties, the *ijekavian* one, based on the same dialect as the other three languages, and the *ekavian* one, based on the Šumadija-Vojvodina dialect (Ivić 1956, 69-70). The use of morpheme *po-* in standard languages is permitted but only with the positive degree of an adjective, and the particle always moderates the adjective (see Jahić, Halilović, Palić 2000, 240; Piper, Klajn, Dragičević 2022, 144). The use of the morpheme *po-* with the other types of speech, i.e. nouns and verbs in standard language, is not permitted.

Štokavian dialect group is consisted of Younger Ikavian, Eastern Bosnian, Eastern Herzegovinian, Slavonian, Zeta-South Sandžak, Šumadija-Vojvodina dialect (which can be further divided into Northern Serbian⁹ and Vojvodina subdialects), Kosovo-Resava dialect (with the Smederevo-Vršac dialect transitional to Šumadija-Vojvodina dialect), Prizren-Timok or Torlak dialect (which can be further divided into Prizren-South Morava, Svrlijig-Zaplanje and Timok-Lužica subdialects) (see Ivić 1956; Brozović, Ivić 1988; Lisac 2003) [fig. 1].

⁹ The term in Serbian is not *srpski* but *srbijski* and in this case it means *northern part of the territory of the Republic of Serbia south of the Sava and the Danube rivers*.

4.1 Grouping of the Štokavian dialects

All these dialects can be grouped differently, according to different parameters:

- a. into *Ekavian*¹⁰, *Ijekavian* and *Ikavian* according to the reflex of the psl. *ě, in *ekavian*, psl. *ě yielded *e* psl. *lěpъ, *město > *ekavian*. *lep*, *mesto* 'beautiful, place', in *ijekavian* psl. *ě, *ě yielded *ije* and *je* psl. *lěpъ, *město > *ekavian* *lijep*, *mjesto* 'same', in *ikavian*, the *ě yielded *i* psl. *lěpъ, *město > *ekavian* *lip*, *misto* 'same' (Ivić, 1956, 56; Okuka 2008, 45); according to this criterium, Šumadija-Vojvodina, Kosovo-Resava and Prizren-Timok dialects are *ekavian*, Eastern Herzegovinian, Eastern Bosnian and Zeta-South Sandžak are *ijekavian* while Younger *Ikavian* and Slavonian¹¹ are *ikavian* (see Ivić 1956, 56-57, Lisac 2003, 29);
- b. into old and neo-Štokavian according to the number and quality of the accents:
 - 1 old Štokavian dialects can be subdivided into
 1. a. archaic - Slavonian, which retained old three-accent system: \hat{V} , \hat{V} , \hat{V}
 1. b. old - Zeta-South Sandžak, Eastern Bosnian, where the quantity of the two long accents was eliminated, or more precisely, \hat{V} was equated with \hat{V} , so these dialects have two accents: \hat{V} \hat{V} (see Ivić 1956, 58-60, Lisac 2003, 29).
 - 2 neo-Štokavian dialects are Eastern Herzegovinian, Šumadija-Vojvodina and Younger *Ikavian*. These dialects experienced metatony, so accents moved one syllable towards the beginning of the word, resulting in a four-accent system (\check{V} , \hat{V} , \check{V} , \acute{V}) where falling accents can appear exclusively on the first or the only syllable of a word (see Ivić 1956, 58-61; Lisac 2003, 29).
 - 3 The Prizren-Timok dialect experienced the greatest changes. In it, all quality and quantity oppositions were eliminated, resulting in only one pitch accent \acute{V} (Ivić 1956, 58)¹².

¹⁰ There is also ekav-ikavian subgroup, where the psl. *ě yields *i* in some morphemes, as for example in the dative case of the feminine -a stem nouns: psl. *žena* : *ženě* sr. *žena* : *ženi*, kosovo-resava: *žena* : *žene* dialect 'woman.NOM : woman.DAT' (Ivić 1956, 56).

¹¹ Even though the *i* reflex of the yat is the most spread, there are also varieties with ikavian-ekavian reflexes of it, as well as some varieties with unchanged yat - *ę* - i.e. yat with closed articulation (see Lisac 2003, 32-3).

¹² For the comparison of dialects according to this criterium with examples see Šekli 2018 (369-71).

- c. the eastern-western division is the oldest one of these dialects, and the criterium is the reflex of the psl. *šč and *žž firstly retained in Western Štokavian, and then changed into šć, žž, psl. *pryščb > Slavonian prišč 'rash' while in Eastern Štokavian it yielded št and žd psl. *pryščb > Šumadija-Vojvodina prišt 'rash' (see Šekli 2018). According to this parameter, Younger Ikavian, Eastern Bosnian and Slavonian dialects fall into the category of the Western Štokavian dialects, while Eastern-Herzegovinian, Zeta-South Sandžak, Šumadija-Vojvodina, Kosovo-Resava and Smederevo-Vršac as well as Torlak dialects fall into the Eastern group. At the same time, for this research, the most important divide appears to be this one.

4.2 Examples of the appearance of the particle *po* in Štokavian dialects

In this part, we will show examples of the use of the free particle *po* in Štokavian dialects, according to the eastern-western divide.

4.2.1 Western Štokavian dialects

Local varieties of the Slavonian dialect we used in the research do not use the particle *po-* with adjectives (cf. Sekereš 1966; Sekereš 1977).

Varieties of the Eastern Bosnian dialect use the particle *po-* with adjectives (cf. Meša 2021), while in the basin of the Lašva River, it is rarely used (cf. Mustabašić 2015). The occurrence of the free particle *po-* in this dialect could also be due to the fact that the local varieties we used in the research are adjacent to the Eastern Herzegovinian dialect.

Younger Ikavian – the particle *po-* is present in its western part, around the city of Bihać, where examples like *poljut* 'quite angry', *pomlad* 'quite young', *pomiran* 'quite quiet', *ponajveći* 'somewhat the biggest' are documented (Peco 2007, 210). It is not present in the variety of the dialect spoken by Bunjevci in Vojvodina (cf. Crnković 2015) or in Livno (cf. Ramić 1999). Its presence in the Bihać region could result from the fact that it is completely surrounded by the Eastern Herzegovinian dialect.

4.2.2 Eastern Štokavian

Eastern Herzegovinian – the particle *po-* is present in all of its local varieties, and is mostly used with adjectives and adverbs: *pòbolji* 'quite good', *pògori* 'quite bad', *pòviši* 'quite high', *pòredī* 'quite rare', *pòmładi* 'quite young' – Old Herzegovina (Vušović 1927, 50); *pòveliki*

‘quite big’, *pòmālī* ‘quite small’, *põjeftinā* ‘quite cheap’ – Užička Crna Gora (Marković 2011, 550), but there are also examples of the usage of the particle *po-* with a noun, though with the modified meaning e.g. *põsiròma* ‘quite poor’ (Vušović 1927, 50, Marković 2021, 550). Vušović shows an example of a word with two accents: *põdòbri* ‘quite good’, *pònèsretan* ‘quite unlucky’ (2012, 550), while Nikolić gives some more examples (12 and 13). In these cases, the particle *po-* moderates the meaning of an adjective.

- (12) *ì mala sam jèdnu pòzlu snā u.* (Nikolić 1991, 415);
have.F.SG.PTCP be.3.SG.PRES one.F.SG.ACC evil.F.SG.ACC daughter-in-law.F.SG.ACC
‘I had a quite evil (=bad) daughter-in-law.’

- (13) *Jèdna žèna pòkrúpna ì mala je*
One.F.SG.NOM woman.F.SG.NOM large.F.SG.NOM have.F.SG.PTCP be.3.SG.PRES
đècē pò dosta (Nikolić 1991, 415).
child.N.PL.ACC a lot
‘A quite large woman had quite a lot of children.’

On the other hand, it can be used with both comparative and superlative degrees of an adjective (examples 14 and 15):

- (14) *ì mō vākō malo pòvišē imánje* (Nikolić 1991, 416);
have.M.SG.PTCP like this a bit high estate.N.SG.ACC
‘So, up there, he had an estate.’

- (15) *ponā jbliži do mēne* (Nikolić 1991, 416).
near.M.SG.NOM.SUP to 1.SG.GEN
‘nearest one to me’

Aa interesting occurrence appears in the variety of Piva and Drob-njaci, where depending on the accent, the particle *po-* and the adjective can form a single phonetical word, or both can retain their own accent:

- a. if the adjective following the particle has the short falling accent, the entire phrase is pronounced as one phonetical word, with the short falling accent: *põ dõbar* > *põdobar* ‘quite good’, *põ bõlji* > *põbolji* ‘quite better’, *põ vēcī* > *põveći* ‘quite bigger’;
- b. if the adjective following the particle has the short rising accent, the phrase consists of two separate words: *põ mālèn* > *põ mālèn* ‘quite small’, *põ šìrok* > *põ šìrok* ‘quite wide’, *põ dèbeō* > *põ dèbeō* ‘quite fat’ (Vuković 1938, 296).

Šumadija-Vojvodina – the particle is present only in the Northern Serbian subdialect, while in the Vojvodinian subdialect it is not (cf.

Nikolić 1964; Ivić, Bošnjaković, Dragin 1994). In Northern Serbian subdialect it bears the meaning ‘too, much’, while used with comparative and superlative it moderates the meaning of an adjective (Radovanović 2014, 260)¹³ (examples 16, 17 and 18):

- (16) *bíla je ona podugačkā i vè likā* (Radovanović 2014, 260);
be.F.SG.PTCP be.3.SG.PRES 3.F.SG.NOM long.F.SG.NOM and big.F.SG.NOM
‘she was very long and big’

- (17) *bíla je vàkō i pō lēpa* (Radovanović 2014, 260);
be.F.SG.PTCP be.3.SG.PRES like this also beautiful.F.SG.NOM
‘so, she was quite beautiful, too’

- (18) *bĩō pōveći tāj* (Radovanović 2014, 260).
be.M.SG.PTCP big.M.SG.NOM that.M.SG.NOM
‘that one was somewhat bigger’

Zeta-South Sandžak – in this dialect, it is also mostly used with adjectives (examples 19 and 20):

- (19) *Izēdi něšto pō le[p]še pā lēzi* (Miletić 1940, 423);
eat.2.SG.IMP something.N.SG.ACC pretty.N.SG.ACC and lay.2.SG.IMP
‘Eat something somewhat nicer and go to bed.’

- (20) *Negō[v]a [j]je kũća pōnā jbliža mō jōj* (Miletić 1940, 423).
his.F.SG.NOM be.3.SG.PRES house.F.SG.NOM near.F.SG.NOM.SUP mine.F.SG.DAT
‘His house is by far the nearest one to mine.’

It can also be used with comparative and superlative and can be both used for moderating and enforcing the original meaning of an adjective *pōljepši* ‘somewhat more beautiful/much more beautiful’, *pōbolji* ‘somewhat better/much better’, *pōgrđi* ‘somewhat uglier/much uglier’, *pōnajbolji* ‘quite the best/best by far’ (Čupić 1977, 85)¹⁴.

Kosovo-Resava and Smederevo-Vršac – it is also present in these dialects, but it has two roles depending on the local variant: it either has a meaning ‘quite or much’ (example 21) as in much of the Šumadija-Vojvodina dialect and Eastern Herzegovinian (cf. Jović 1968, 115) and can be used with comparative and superlative too (example 22, 23), or can be used as a marker for the comparative, which is significant for the local varieties adjacent to the Prizren-Timok

¹³ See also Radovanović 2006.

¹⁴ See also Barjaktarević 1966.

dialect (example 24 and 25). In the latter, it can also be used with nouns and adjectives (Radić 1990, 29)¹⁵.

- (21) *pogûs* *pasûlj* (Bošnjaković 2012, 153)
thick.M.SG.NOM bean.M.SG.NOM.
'quite thick bean' = 'quite thick bean dip'

- (22) *dâj* *mi* *malo pöbolje* *vîno* (Jović 1968, 115)
give.2.SG.IMP 1.SG.DAT a bit good.N.SG.ACC.COMP vine.N.SG.ACC
'Give me somewhat better wine.'

- (23) *Bölje* *bi* *bîlo* *da* *mu* *učukam*
good.COMP be.3.SG.AOR be.N.SG.PTCP conj 3.SG.DAT hammer.1.SG.PRES
pötanji *kö lac* (Tomić 1987, 385)
thin.M.SG.ACC.COMP stake.M.SG.ACC
'It would be better if I hammered him a quite thinner stake.'

- (24) *bila* *pô* *mâla* *žěna* (Radić 1990, 29)
be.F.SG.PTCP PART.COMP small.F.SG.NOM woman.F.SG.NOM
'she was a smaller woman' = 'she was a rather small woman'

- (25) *pô* *rastežu* *po* *varoš* (Radić 1990, 29)
PART.COMP stretch.3.PL.PRES over.PREP town.F.SG.ACC
'(they) stretch it more all over the town'

The Prizren-Timok dialect – in this dialect, it is used to mark the comparative degree, and is used by adjectives, nouns, and verbs. It also can be separated from the parts of speech it is related to by other parts of speech, as is shown in these examples:

- (26) *ti* *si* *po-zdrava* *odnas* (Ćirić 1983, 79);
2.SG.NOM be.2.SG.PRES MORE.PART.COMP-healthy.F.SG.NOM from 1.PL.GEN
'you are healthier than us'

- (27) *od* *njeg* *po-gazda* *neje*
from 3.SG.GEN MORE.PART.COMP-landlord.M.SG.NOM not.be.3.SG.PRES

- (28) *imalo* (Ćirić 1983, 79);
have.N.SG.PTCP
'there wasn't a better landlord than him'

¹⁵ The particle is not present in the eastern part of the dialect, more precisely in the variety of Resava (see Peco, Milovanović 1968).

- (29) *jeno* *po-ťnko* *drvo* (Tomić 1984, 249)
 one.N.SG.NOM MORE.PART.COMP-thin.N.SG.NOM tree.N.SG.NOM
 'a thinner tree'
- (30) *Od njega* *po-veš* *kujundžija*
 from3.SG.GEN more.PART.COMP-skillful.M.SG.NOM silversmith.M.SG.NOM
ne beše (Remetić 1996, 478)
 not be.3.SG.IMPF
 'there was no more skillful silversmith than him'
- (31) *Tvoja* *pucal'ka* *po* *je*
 your.F.SG.NOM shotgun.F.SG.NOM MORE-PART.COM be.3.SG.PRES
glasovita *ze njina* (Remetić 1996; 478)
 loud.F.SG.NOM than 3.PL.NOM
 'your shotgun is louder than theirs'

The above examples show us that phonetical realization may vary from dialect to dialect and that not only in the Prizren-Timok dialect can the particle *po-* be separated from the adjective. Besides that, the possibility of the particle *po-* to have its own stress implies that it is not fully bound to the adjective or an adverb it is related to, which means that it is not a prefix but rather a free particle bearing the meaning 'much' (in the Prizren-Timok dialect and some local varieties of the Kosovo-Resava dialect, being the marker of the comparative degree of an adjective, while in other dialects, it either has a meaning 'quite, pretty' or 'much'. This is another reason the morpheme *po-* should be considered a particle rather than a prefix.

4.3 Relation of the Phenomenon in Prizren-Timok Dialect With the One in Bulgarian and Macedonian

Both Macedonian and Bulgarian languages undergone the complete shift from synthetic to analytic comparison, so there is no trace of the former, at least when it comes to the comparative forms of adjectives of the former synthetic system. Traces could be found in the comparison of adverbs both in standard language as well as in dialects. Standard languages retained the analytic (suppletive) comparative form of the adverb mac. *mnogu* 'a lot, many', bul. *mnogo* 'id'

which is *poveke* ‘more’ in Macedonian¹⁶ and *poveče* ‘more’ in Bulgarian¹⁷. The same development occurred in the Prizren-Timok dialect.

Even though the particle *po-* had sporadic appearances in older texts (see Haralampiev 2001, 107), it appears that both *po-* and *naj-* as markers for comparative and superlative were firstly used with adverbs (Haralampiev 2001, 107). The shift appears more often in the Macedonian and Bulgarian redaction of the old Church Slavonic from the 12th and 13th centuries onwards. In this period are documented adverbs such as *помного* ‘more’, *порано* ‘earlier’. In the *Trojan story* from the 14th century, there are a lot of examples of the use of analytical instead of synthetic comparison (examples 31 and 32):

- (32) *da ne bōdet člověkъ po-bogatъ*
to.CONJ not be.3.SG.PRES man.M.SG.NOM more.PART.COM-wealthy.M.SG
ot tebe (Haralampiev 2001, 107)
from 2.SG.GEN
‘may there be no man wealthier than you’

- (33) *a ty si počtenъ gospodinъ*
and 2.SG.NOM be.2.SG.PRES honest.M.SG.NOM man.M.SG.NOM
i po-dobrъ igrecъ (Haralampiev 2001, 107)
and more.PART.COMP-good.M.SG.NOM player.M.SG.NOM
‘and you are an honest gentleman and even better player’

¹⁶ In Kriva Palanka dialect of the Macedonian language there are two more adverbs with synthetic comparative: *više* ‘more’ which is used alongside *veke* ‘more’, and *brže* ‘faster’ (Stoevska-Denčova, 2014, 82-83). In the Bansko variety of the Strumica dialect of the Macedonian language, the adverb *brže* is also used, but as it appears, it is considered positive and not comparative form: *brže* : *póbrže* : *nájbrže* ‘fast, faster, the fastest’ (Cvetanovski et al. 2014, 75).

¹⁷ Eastern Bulgarian dialects show traits that most probably developed as a result of the influence of neighboring Turkish and Greek languages. In the Eastern Rup dialects, particle *po-* is absent, and the comparative form of the adjective is expressed only by the preposition *ot* ‘from, than’ (example a), which corresponds to the Turkish construction positive + ablative case (example b):

- a) *Tôi ut mène stâr.* (Vitanova, 6).
3.SG.NOM from 1.SG.GEN old.M.SG.POS
‘He is older than me.’
b) *O benden yaşlı.*
3.SG.NOM 1.SG.ABL old.SG.POS
‘He is older than me.’

The probability that the trait is developed under the influence of Turkish is even stronger if we consider the fact that in this dialect the morpheme *in* is used rather than *nai* to form superlative (example c), which is a loanword from Turkish *en* ‘the most’ (example d):

- c) *Mòja brat bil in-gol’ám.* (Vitanova, 6).
my.M.SG.DEF brother.M.SG be.3.SG.PST most.PREP.SUP-big.M.SG.NOM
‘My brother was the biggest.’
d) *Kardeş-im en büyük-tü.*
brother.SG.NOM-my.SG.NOM most.PREP.SUP big.SG.NOM-be.3.SG.PST
‘My brother was the biggest.’

According to Belić, this use of the particle *po-* developed in Prizren-Timok dialects under the influence of Bulgarian and Macedonian dialects, most probably given the fact that there are still several adjectives that have both synthetic and analytic comparisons (Belić 1905, 438).

As we already mentioned in chapter two, Belić named the *po-* a preposition (1905, 438). Etymologically, the particle *naj-* is derived from the preposition psl. **na* and the relative pronoun psl. **jb* (Matasović 2008, 224, see Wandl 2022). But the *naj-* was not fully grammaticalized in the Common Slavic period and was competing with the constructions **prě* - and *вѣсѣхъ* + comparative. However, it was used more often with adjectives than with adverbs. Since the adverbs used **nai* for forming the superlative degree, the use of this particle spread to the adjectives as well, ousting the other aforementioned means of constructing the superlative degree. We believe that this development opened the way for the particle *po-* to be used with the comparative degree, and then we could presume that there was a time when particles and synthetic comparative markers were used simultaneously to mark the comparative degree. After that, the preposition-derived particles remained the only marker for both comparative and superlative degrees¹⁸. At the time when the particles *po-* and *naj-* got the meaning ‘more’ and ‘most’, they were able to be completely detached from the adjective or adverb they were used with and were able to interact with other parts of speech too. The probability that this thing first happened to the particle *naj-* and after that to the particle *po-* lies in the fact that the particle *naj-* can be used with verbs or even separated from an adjective in those local varieties, while the use of the particle *po-* with other parts of speech was not documented (example 33):

- (34) *nâj* *sam* *mřavij* *od*
most.PART.SUP be.2.SG.PRES skinny.F.SG.NOM from
mō jī *brāčē* *i* *sestārā* (Radovanović 2014, 260)
my.M.PL.GEN brother.M.PL.GEN and sister.F.PL.GEN
‘I am the skinniest of all my brothers and sisters’

¹⁸ The anonymous reviewer of the article reminds that **nai* is grammaticalized as a superlative marker; it has probably lost any connection with prepositions in the speakers’ awareness. Linking it directly to the behavior of prepositions is suspicious. We can agree that the time of the grammaticalization of the particles *po-* and *naj-* as constituents of the comparative and superlative form did not happen simultaneously, but we think that there is no doubt that the existence of the particle *naj-* opened the way, or supported the grammaticalization of the particle *po-* as the constituent of the comparative degree, because of the typologically similar process in their development.

4.4 Periodization and other changes

The switch from the synthetic to analytic comparison is sometimes related to the loss or simplification of the case system (see Asenova 2002). Yet the elision of the case system and complete replacement of case markers with prepositions is not yet completely finished, even in Macedonian and Bulgarian (see Konevski 1996, 155), where the switch from the synthetic to analytic comparison is complete. Besides that, the first results of the change in the case system were visible in the 15th century, approximately one century after the analytic comparison became more present. On the other hand, a local variety of a Smederevo-Vršac dialect, the variety spoken by Gallipoli Serbs, is an example where all the seven cases (nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative, instrumental and vocative) are retained (Ivić 1956, 158), yet the comparison is completely analytical. Superlative is marked by the particle *naj* + positive, while the comparative is expressed by the particle *još* + positive (example 34) and can also be used with verbs (35):

- (35) *Môj* *brăt* *du menê*
my.M.SG.NOM brother.M.SG.NOM to 1.SG.DAT
je *jôš* *mlât* (Ivić 1957, 225);
be.3.SG.PRES more.PART.COMP young.M.SG.NOM
'My brother is younger than me'

- (36) *Uvî* *drugî* *sîn* *jôš* *znă*
(Ivić 1957, 225).
This.M.SG.NOM other.M.SG.NOM son.M.SG.NOM more.PART.COMP know.3.SG.
PRES
'This other son knows more.'

The shift was complete, and there is no trace of the synthetic comparison anymore; for example, in the Prizren-Timok dialect, there are still some adjectives and adverbs that retained the synthetic comparison like *stareji* 'older', *mladžeji* 'younger', *bolje* 'better', etc. (Ivić 1957, 226). If we have this in mind, we can argue that the use of the particle *po-* in the Prizren-Timok dialect developed later than in Bulgarian and Macedonian languages, but before the migration of Serbs from this area to Romania, since both Prizren-Timok varieties spoken in Romania, i.e. Karaševo (see Radan, Uskatu 2016) and Svinica (see Tomić 1984) show this trait.

5 Conclusion

It is apparent that the morpheme *po-* is widespread throughout the Slavic world. Depending on the language, it can either mean 'pretty, quite' or 'very' and can be used either with only positive degree like in Czech, or with comparative like in Russian, or with positive, comparative and superlative, as in some dialects of the CSS. On the other hand, in Prizren-Timok dialect as well as in Macedonian and Bulgarian languages it is the only way of making the comparative and superlative degrees.

Out of the three dialect groups of the CSS, only in Štokavian does the free particle *po-* find its place in the system of the gradation of adjectives. But even there, it is not present in all its dialects. The border roughly corresponds to the eastern-wester divide between the Štokavian dialects, which is based on the development of the proto-Slavic clusters *šč and *žž, but with some corrections. It is not present in the Slavonian dialect, nor in the greatest part of the Young Ika-vian dialect. It is present in some parts of the latter and some parts of the Eastern Bosnian dialect, but that could be the result of their proximity to the Eastern Herzegovinian. Besides Eastern-Herzegovinian, it is present in the Šumadija-Vojvodina dialect but without the Vojvodina subdialect, and it is present in both Zeta-South Sandžak and Kosovo-Resava dialects, while in Prizren-Timok dialect it is the only way of marking the comparative.

Even though the particle *po-* is often defined as a prefix, we argue that it should be called the free particle since it has a meaning that can modify the word it is related to and can be separated from it without losing its meaning. Going from west to east, the use of it with other parts of speech besides adjectives and adverbs becomes more and more apparent. The use of it as a marker for the comparative degree of an adjective is enabled by the fact that the superlative is created with the particle *naj-* which etymologically is preposition, as well as the particle *po-* and their development was typologically similar.

The switch from synthetic to analytic comparison in the Prizren-Timok dialect was probably due to the influence of the neighboring dialects of Bulgarian and Macedonian languages. Given that some adjectives and adverbs still retain the old way of comparison, we can say that it happened in the Prizren-Timok dialect later than in these two languages.

List of abbreviations

alb	Albanian
ave	Avestan
bul	Bulgarian
CSS	Central South Slavic
eng	English
fre	French
gre	Greek
id	identical
lav	Latvian
lit	Lithuanian
mac	Macedonian
OCS	Old Church Slavonic
oldp	Old Persian
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
por	Portuguese
PSl	Proto-Slavic
rom	Romanian

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