

## BALKAN SPRACHBUND MORPHO-SYNTACTIC FEATURES

# Studies in Natural Language and Linguistic Theory

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# BALKAN SPRACHBUND MORPHO-SYNTACTIC FEATURES

*by*

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*To my daughters Biljana and Jasna  
and my grandchildren Neven and Lea  
with all my love*

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## PREFACE

At the end of 1998, Professor Pieter Muysken was awarded the Spinoza prize of the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NOW) and set up a research program entitled “Lexicon and Syntax”. The implementation of the Program started in the autumn of 1999 with research on the lexicon and syntax in a number of areas where contacts between different languages are intensive.<sup>1</sup> For the languages of many of the areas selected, basic data had to be collected. For most of the languages of the Balkan *Sprachbund* area, however, there are grammars and dictionaries. Moreover, quite a number of studies of the Balkan *Sprachbund* features have been published. Accordingly, when I joined the team of the Project, I aimed at a description of the state of art in the field.

After several months of research, I realized that Balkanists have mainly been concerned with compiling lists of similarities and making parallels between the lexical and grammatical forms of the Balkan languages, while analyses of the interaction of the Balkan *Sprachbund* morpho-syntactic features with other features in the structure of the DP or the sentence of a given language/dialect are scarce. This oriented me towards descriptions of Balkan *Sprachbund* morpho-syntactic features in the context of individual sub-systems in nine Balkan language to which they relate – the Slavic languages Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbo-Croatian; the Romance languages Romanian, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian; Albanian; Modern Greek; and the Arli Balkan Romani dialect.

Serbo-Croatian is spoken as a majority language in Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro, and as a minority language in areas in Hungary and Romania adjacent to Croatia and Serbia.<sup>2</sup> Macedonian is spoken as a majority language in Macedonia, and as a minority language in a large area in Northern Greece, as well as in areas in Albania adjacent to Macedonia. Albanian is spoken as a majority language in Albania and the (Southern Serbian) province of Kosovo and Metonia, and as a minority language in Western Macedonia and North-Western Greece. Romanian is spoken as a majority language in Romania, and as a minority language in areas in Serbia and Bulgaria, adjacent to Romania. Modern Greek is spoken as a majority language in Greece and as a minority language in Southern Albania. Bulgarian is spoken as a majority language in Bulgaria and as a minority language in a restricted area in Serbia adjacent to Bulgaria. Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian and Balkan Romani are not spoken as majority languages in any country on the Balkans or anywhere else. Aromanian is spoken in Central and Western Macedonia, Southern Albania and Central and North-Western Greece. Megleno-Romanian is spoken by a few thousand people originally living in a few villages in what is now Southeastern Macedonia and the adjacent part of Greece. Balkan Romani is spoken by scattered communities throughout the Balkans; Arli is one of the Balkan Romani dialects spoken in and around the capital of Macedonia, Skopje. (see Map)

Unless otherwise specified, the examples for the Balkan Romance languages, the South Eastern Serbian dialects, Albanian, Modern Greek and Arli have been provided by Alexander Grosu, Virginia Hill, Dana Isac, Aleksandra Popescu (Romanian); Dionisie Papațafa (Megleno-Romanian); Matea and Klimentina Hadži-Lega, Kocea and Vergula Nicea, Žiži Marković, Nikola Sofijanov (Aromanian); Nedeljko Bogdanović, Jordana Marković (the South-Eastern Serbian dialects); Alex Murzaku, Agim Poloska, Mirlinda Saračini, Valbona

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<sup>1</sup> For information about the areas, the team and the specific task consult <http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/spls>

<sup>2</sup> Serbo-Croatian has been standardized as Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian.

Toska (Albanian); Eleni Bužarovska, Stella Grillia, Aleksandra Houzouris, Athina Sioupi, Melita Staurou, Marina Tsakosta, Assimakis Tseronis, (Modern Greek); Muarem Ramuš, Jusuf Šaip, Bajram Severdjan (Arli). Krasimira Aleksova, Io Manolesou and Zuzanna Topolinjska, were very helpful with historical data. To all of them I am extremely grateful.

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### Map of the Balkans



### LESS COMMON ALPHABET SYMBOLS<sup>3</sup>

<i>phonemes</i>	<i>symbols</i>								
	M	B	S-C	R	MR	Ar	Al	MG	ABR
<i>consonants</i>									
aspirated voiceless bilabial plosives									ph
aspirated voiced bilabial plosives									bh
aspirated voiceless alveolar plosives									th
aspirated voiced alveolar plosives									dh
voiceless post-alveolar plosives	c	c	c	c/ɥ	c/ɥ	ts	c		c
voiced post-alveolar plosives	dz				dz	dz	x		dz
voiceless palatalized plosives			ć						
voiceless palatal plosives	ќ						q		kj
voiced palatal plosives	ǵ				gi	gi	gǵ		gj
aspirated voiceless velar plosives									kh
aspirated voiced velar plosives									gh
voiceless bilabial fricatives								v	
voiceless dental fricatives							th	th	
voiced dental fricatives							dh	dh	
voiceless palatal fricatives	x		x				h	x	x
voiced velar fricatives						y		gh	
voiceless palatal sibilants	š	š	š	ş	ş	sh	sh		š
voiced palatal sibilants	ž	ž	ž	j	j	j	zh		ž
voiceless palatal affricates	č	č	č		ci	ci	ç		č
aspirated voiceless palatal affricates									čh
voiced palatal affricates	dž	dž	dž				xh		dž
aspirated voiced palatal affricates									džh
palatalized lateral liquids	lj				lj	lj	l		lj
velarized lateral liquids			lj				ll		
voiced palatal nasals	nj		nj		nj	nj	nj		nj
alveolar flaps							r		
alveolar trills							rr		
palatal glides	j	j	j	i	i	i	j	j	j
<i>vowels</i>									
mid-central (schwa)		ă		ă/î	ă	ă	ē		
back-central				â					
high front rounded							y		
suprasegmentals:									
tone in Serbo-Croatian:	` = short rising; `` = short falling; ^ = long falling; ' = long rising								
length in Serbo-Croatian:	- = long								
nasality in Geg Albanian	^ = nasal								

<sup>3</sup> ABR = Arli Balkan Romani; Al = Albanian; Ar = Aromanian; B = Bulgarian; M = Macedonian; MG = Modern Greek; R = Romanian, MR = Megleno-Romanian, S-C = Serbo-Croatian. For Arli Balkan Romani, Albanian, Aromanian, Megleno-Romanian, Romanian and Serbo-Croatian the Latin alphabets that are usually used in these languages are used in the book. Bulgarian, Macedonian and Modern Greek texts have been transcribed with letters from the Latin alphabet.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

### Abbreviations for grammatical features in the glosses<sup>4</sup>

1	1 <sup>st</sup> person
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> person
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> person
Abl	ablative
Acc	accusative
Act	active
Adj	adjective
Admir	admirative
Affirm	affirmative
Agr	agreement
AgrDO(P)	direct object agreement (phrase)
AgrIO(P)	indirect object agreement (phrase)
AgrO(P)	object agreement (phrase)
AgrS(P)	subject agreement (phrase)
Anaph	anaphoric (particle)
Aor	aorist
Asp	aspect (marker)
Ass	assertive
Aux	auxiliary
Cl	clitic
Com	complementizer
Compar	comparative (marker)
Cont	continuous
CP	specifier phrase
D, Det	determiner
Dat	dative
Def	definite
Dimin	diminutive
Disc	discourse (particle)
Dist	distal
Distr	distributive (particle)
DP	determiner phrase
ECM	exceptional case marking
ELD	English left dislocation
Eth	ethical (dative clitic)
Evid	evidential
Excl	exclamatory (particle)
Exhort	exhortative (marker)
Expl	expletive
F, Fem	feminine
FocP	focus phrase

---

<sup>4</sup> The nominative case of nouns and the present tense of verbs are, as a rule, not marked in the glosses; the marking of the present tense of perfective verbs in the Slavic languages is an exception. Gender and number of nouns are marked only when contrast has to be made.



Gen	genitive
Ger	gerund
GQ	generalized quantifier
GQ $\exists$	GQs that are construed in the position where they are interpreted
Hum	human
Imperf	imperfect (tense)/imperfective (aspect)
Imper	imperative
Impers	impersonal
Indic	indicative
Inf	infinitive
Instr	instrumental
Inter	interrogative
Interj	interjection
Inv	inverted (perfect)
LD	left dislocation
Loc	locative
/-Part	/-participle
M, Masc	masculine
Mark	marker
Mod(P)	modality/modal (phrase)
Modif	modifier
Mood(P)	mood (phrase)
M-P	medio-passive
N, Neut	neuter
Neg(P)	negation (phrase)
Nom	nominative
Non-Fin	non-finite
NP	noun phrase
Obl	oblique
Opt	optative
Part	participle
Pass	passive
Past	past
Perf	perfect (tense)/perfective (aspect)
Pl	plural
Pluperf	pluperfect
Poss	possessive
PP	prepositional phrase
Pres	present
Pron	pronoun
Prox	proximate
Prox1	proximate to 1 <sup>st</sup> person
Prox2	proximate to 2 <sup>nd</sup> person
Refl	reflexive
Repet	repetitive
Sg	singular
Spec	specifier
Subj	subjunctive
SubP	subordinator phrase
Sup	supine

Superl	superlative
TopP	topicalization phrase
TP	tense phrase
Voc	vocative

**Symbols**

*	= ungrammatical
?, ??	= possibly acceptable <sup>5</sup>
%	= acceptable in some dialects or by some speakers <sup>6</sup>
←, →	marks directionality of cliticization
–	links items pronounced as a single phonological word
capital letters	mark stressed words or syllables

---

<sup>5</sup> The occurrence of \*, ? or ?? to the immediate left of a bracket denotes that the bracketing is not allowed or is seldom allowed, i.e. that the item within the brackets has to occur obligatorily or preferably.

<sup>6</sup> The Arli Balkan Romani, Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian have not been standardized. Yet, the percentage symbol (%) is used with reference to Aromanian, Megleno-romanian and Arli Romani only if the usage is not characteristic for all the speakers of the selected dialects.