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Persistence and change in Ottoman patterns of code-switching in the republic of Macedonia: nostalgia, duress and language shift in contemporary Southeastern Europe

Victor A. Friedman

University of Chicago, United States of America

The phenomenon of codeswitching is arguably as old as language contact. It is documented, for example, in the Bible, where it is employed in the Book of Daniel (II:4). But the modern study of codeswitching reflects a global political situation: the only pre-1989 study of codeswitching as such in the former or present communist countries in the twentieth century is McClure and McClure's (1988) work on Vingard, Romania. With this exception, the languages of Eastern Europe have figured as topics of studies on codeswitching only when historical circumstance placed the speakers inside the borders of Western Europe (e.g. Gal 1988) or when East Europeans have emigrated to the West (e.g. Ewing 1984). The upheavals of 1989 and the spilt of Eastern Europe into a Northern and Southern tier is also reflected in the progress of codeswitching studies. Recent books have appeared on Polish-German contact in Poland (Brzezina 1989) and triglossia in Czech (Sgall 1992), but as yet Balkan language contact has not received more than passing mention in the codeswitching literature (e.g. Meyers-Scotton 1993:219, cf. Weinreich 1953:74-82). Another characteristic of work on codeswitching is its synchronicity. Although there have been some speculations on the relation of codeswitching to language change over time (e.g. Heath 1989, Meyers-Scotton 1993), codeswitching studies have treated spoken discourse phenomena (an exception is Timm 1978). This concentration is understandable given the origins and goals the research on codeswitching as an area of contemporary linguistic investigation, but there exists both primary and secondary textual evidence concerning the history of codeswitching which has yet to be exploited.

In this paper, I shall examine aspects of the sociopolitical status of codeswitching in the Republic of Macedonia from the nineteenth century to the present (1994). Both codeswitching and language shift in the Republic of Macedonia today are in some respects significantly different from what they were twenty years ago while in others they continue tendencies attested from the previous century. Codeswitching phenomena in Macedonia can be seen as both following and enacting political change and present striking contrasts with countries such as Belgium and Canada (Treffers-Daller 1992, Heller 1992). As Gal (1988:259-60) and Heller (1988:268-69) point out, there is a need to account for differences in codeswitching across case studies and to view such strategies in diachronic perspective. This paper is an attempt to address these issues and at the same time point the way for further research.

In the Republic of Macedonia, Macedonian is the first language of approximately two-thirds of the population, and there are five other legally significant languages for which the official figures are roughly the following: 21% Albanian, 5% Turkish, 3% Romani, 2% Serbo-Croatian, and 1/2 % Vlah¹ (Antonovska et al. 1994). Bulgarian, Greek, Judezmo have figured as significant contact languages in the past. The first two were marginalized by politics and emigration after the partition of 1913, while almost all speakers of Judezmo were deported and destroyed by the Nazis in 1943.

¹ Vlah refers to both Arumanian and Megleno-Rumanian, two closely related Balkan Romance languages that separated from Daco-Romanian about millenium ago.

Language choice and ethnic identity are further complicated by religion. Under Ottoman rule, ethnicity was determined by religious community (*millet*), so the word *Turk* meant 'Muslim' and *Greek* meant 'Greek Orthodox Christian', regardless of language. During the course of the nineteenth century independent Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian states were formed out of territory from the declining Ottoman Empire and modern literary standards for Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbo-Croatian were elaborated and codified. These little states were engaged in an on-going struggle for greater territory and the concomitant loyalty of the populations on that territory. Their claims overlapped precisely in Macedonia, a region bounded roughly by Mount Olympus, the Pindus, Šar and Rhodope mountains that remained part of Turkey-in-Europe until the First Balkan War in 1912². Macedonia was inhabited predominantly by Christian Slavs, albeit other linguistic and religious groups were majorities in specific areas. Greece advanced its territorial claims on the basis of religion, Serbia and Bulgaria on the basis of language.

The Slavic dialects of Macedonia stand midway between Serbian and Bulgarian on the South Slavic dialectal continuum. As the modern Serbian and Bulgarian literary languages were gradually standardized and their concomitant modern ethnic identities crystallized, a separate Macedonian ethnic identity also took shape and efforts were made at codifying a Macedonian standard language. Because such an independent development was contrary to the territorial ambitions of all the neighbouring states, these endeavours were opposed and suppressed. This repression combined with the partition of Macedonia among Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia in 1913 rendered it impossible for Macedonian language and identity to follow the same course as that of its neighbours. In Serbia and Bulgaria, Macedonian was treated as a dialect of Serbian and Bulgarian, respectively, in Greece its very existence was denied abroad and suppressed at home. The situation in Bulgaria and Greece is the same now as in 1913. In 1944, the part of Macedonia that had fallen to Serbia became the Republic of Macedonia with modern Macedonian as its official language. This republic was incorporated into the Yugoslav federation, where it remained until 1991, when, with the break-up of the SFRY, the Republic of Macedonia declared its independence. For a detailed account of these complex events, see Friedman (1975, 1985) and Lunt (1986).

During the nineteenth century under Ottoman rule, Turkish was the dominant language of the state and the prestige language among Muslims. Among Christians, Greek had prestige as a language of commerce and the language of the church, which controlled both schools and ecclesiastical courts. Slavic was the language of the majority and was in cultural competition with Greek. Within Slavic, Serbian and Bulgarian were in competition for hegemony in Macedonia, while the Macedonians themselves were divided among those seeking to form a separate literary language, those who identified as Serbs or Bulgarians, and those who chose Greek or Turkish identity on the basis of religion. Vlachs used Greek as their prestige language outside the home, although Vlach merchants were multilingual. Since the majority of Albanians were Muslims, Albanian was subordinated to Turkish in a manner similar to the subordination of Vlach to Greek. Among Albanian Christians, Greek was identified as the language of the church and Macedonian as the language of the Christian majority. Romani was at the bottom of the sociolinguistic scale, while Judezmo was in a sense outside it, since Jews constituted a *millet* separate from both Christians and Muslims. Then as now, the lower down on the social scale, the more languages spoken, although rural women were often monoglot (Leake 1814:374-75, Brailsford 1906:85-86).

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² When speaking of the pre-1913 period or panchronically, *Macedonia* refers to this geographic region. For the post-1913 period, *Macedonia* dignates only the territory that became the Republic of Macedonia.

Sociolinguistic status relations in mid-nineteenth century Macedonia are reflected in codeswitching in the folk tales of Marko Cepenkov, who from 1856 to 1898 collected and published folklore from the Prilep region of west central Macedonia. Cepenkov's material reflects linguistic attitudes of the Slavic Christian majority in Macedonia just before the political upheavals of the late nineteenth century initiated radical change in linguistic as well as political status.

The most frequent language of switching is Turkish, followed by Greek, Albanian, Vlah and Romani in that order of frequency. Of 155 anecdotal tales in Cepenkov (1972), 24 have codeswitches into Turkish, 4 into Greek, 3 with Albanian, 2 with Vlah and 1 with Romani. Conspicuous by its absence is Judezmo. When Jews codeswitch from the Macedonian matrix of the narrative, it is into Turkish. In addition to the 34 tales with interlingual codeswitching, there are 11 tales with dialectal codeswitches, given that the frame is Prilep Macedonian. Of these, 8 have switches employing the dialect of Mariovo, an isolated region southeast of Prilep and 3 into Šop, the dialect of peasants living west of Sofia. Thus almost a third of the anecdotal tales utilize some form of codeswitching.

Let us now examine who codeswitches and why. Turkish is the one language used not only by Turks but also by Albanians, Macedonian Christians and Muslims, Roms, and Jews. Languages other than Turkish and Macedonian are only used by their native speakers. Because these anecdotal tales as a group constitute a humorous genre, the identification of characters by ethnic group usually expresses the type of tensions and issues of identity found in ethnic jokes in general, and codeswitching is one of the means for emphasizing the desired effect. However, just as Turkish is the one language codeswitched into by other ethnic groups, so, too, Turks occur not only as objects of humour but as unmarked characters, e.g., customers in the market. Moreover, while the codeswitches into other languages serve only to characterize the individual as a member of the relevant ethnic group, codeswitching into Turkish is itself occasionally the point of the story. In these instances, the butt of the humour is usually a non-Turcophone Muslim (Albanian or Macedonian) – the point being that although they are "Turks" under the *millet* system they do not know much Turkish – or a peasant, whose ignorance of Turkish is ridiculed as rural and unsophisticated, as in the following example involving a Turkish toll collector and a Macedonian peasant on his way to market:

- (1) –Ne var orda, bre sinko? –Var, aga, var. –E, var, ama ne var? –Var, aga, var!
(Cepenkov 1972:144)
–What is that there, sonny? –Lime, sir, lime. ––Well, there's something, but what is it?– –Lime, sir, lime

Moreover, Turkish is also the only language that is codeswitched into not only by characters but by the narrator himself, as in the following example, which concludes a tale with the narrator's comment:

- (2) Demek, od lepeška zelnik ne biduat! Turcite velat: Soj kovar čovekot. (Cepenkov 1972:109)
That is to say you can't make a pie with a cow patty! The Turks say: Lineage determines the person.

From all this it can be argued that Turkish codeswitching in Cepenkov reflects the position of that language at the top of the sociolinguistic hierarchy.

Leaving aside the dialectal Macedonian switches, Greek is both the next most common language of switching and second in power and status in nineteenth-century Macedonia.

Although Greek had prestige as a kultursprache, however, it was already being challenged by Slavic, and by collecting and publishing these tales Cepenkov was consciously contributing to this challenge. Three of the codeswitches into Greek in Cepenkov's tales express ethnic tension by representing Greeks as foolish, e.g. a Greek sees a big fish in the sea and tries to catch it by stabbing it with a knife. Seeing that this is useless, he stands by the water's edge, hides the knife behind his back, and says:

- (3) Ela psari, den eho maheri. (Cepenkov 1972:149)
Come fish, I don't have a knife.³ [Ελα ψαρι, δεν εχω μαχερι]

In the fourth instance, a group of swindlers cheat some merchants in Istanbul by dressing a Turkish porter as a bishop and teaching him to answer in Greek to any question: Malista, puli kala [Μαλιστα, πουλι καλα] 'Of course, very good' (Cepenkov 1972:152). Although the point of the joke revolves around the dangers of the Big City, the use of a Turkish porter to play a Greek bishop to execute the scam also signals the resentment felt by Slavs at the two groups in power.

The frequency of the remaining three languages also reflects their relative sociolinguistic position as well as their relative numbers of speakers at the time: Albanian, then Vlah, then Romani (cf. Kānčev 1900:296). The fact that Jews switch into Turkish and never Judezmo arguably reflects their status "outside" the sociolinguistic hierarchy. Dialectal Slavic codeswitching in Cepenkov essentially reflects a rural/urban opposition.

There is also a difference in the nature of the codeswitching itself. Turks, Greeks and Slavs generally engage in intersentential codeswitching, whereas Albanians and Roms codeswitch ~~int~~sententially, as in the following examples:

- (5) Kje mi vikne "Dade!" -- a pak jas K e mu rečam "Olum!"... (Cepenkov 1972:108)
He will say to me "Daddy!" -- and then I will say to him "Son!"...
- (6) Tungjatjeta ore dervish baba! E po bujrum edno sari medžidija bakshish za tvojata amajlija (Cepenkov 1972:120)
Long life to you, O father dervish! Well, here, have a golden coin as payment for your amulet.

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It should be noted, however, that the narrator himself codeswitches in mid-sentence, as in example (2) above.

Gender is another factor in codeswitching in Cepenkov's tales: All the codeswitchers are men. It could be argued that this is a reflection of the fact that more men than women were bilingual during this period, which resulted from the fact that women had fewer contacts outside their families or villages (cf. above). It is interesting to note, however, that the one example I have encountered so far of a woman codeswitching in a folk tale (Penušliski 1981:183) involved a humorous erotic context in which a poor young married woman lures into her home both Christian and Muslim authority figures who have importuned her for her favours, so that her husband can steal their clothes. When the Turkish characters arrive, the woman greets them in (dialectal) Turkish :

³ This tale could also be interpreted as an allegory on Greek attempts at Hellenizing the non-Greek Christian population of nineteenth century Macedonia.

- (7) Došol efenidjata u edin saato: Dobro večer, dobro večer!
 - Oždžldi, ožbulduk - odgovorila mu taa. (Penušliski 1981:183)
 The [Turkish] gentleman came at one o'clock: Good evening, good evening!
 - Welcome, well met [Turkish: hoş geldi hoş bulduk] -- she answered him.

The woman is the main protagonist in this tale and the codeswitching here not only heightens both the ethnic difference and the humour, since this greeting is setting the stage for the farce to follow, but also emphasizes the woman's dominant role.

Anecdotal tales are not the only evidence of nineteenth-century codeswitching in Macedonia. Codeswitching in songs from this period also shows remarkable variety. Jašar-Nasteva (1967:15-16) cites examples of Macedonian/Greek, Albanian/Greek, Macedonian/Vlah, Macedonian/Turkish, and Macedonian/Albanian/Turkish as illustrative. Judezmo/Turkish and other combinations are also attested. Most often there is codeswitching between matrix language verses and a codeswitched refrain, but intrasentential switching in verses also occurs, as in the following example:

- (8) Imaš oči/kako fildžan/jandim aman/jalvaraim/žel januma
 Pot baj ridža, čiko,/fale e češ me mu./Sojle benimle of, of!/Zbori sos mene.
 (Jašar-Nasteva 1987:15)
 You have eyes/like little coffee cup[s]/I have burned up, alas/come to my side.
 I am begging you, lassie/talk and laugh with me/talk with me, oh woe/talk with me.

Although songs do not display the same complexity as tales, the highest frequency of Macedonian/Turkish codeswitches is a similar reflection of the dominant position of that language at that time.

With the partition of 1913, Serbo-Croatian became the politically dominant language on the territory of what would later become the Republic of Macedonia. With the exception of 1941-44, when Macedonia was partitioned between Bulgaria and Albania, Serbo-Croatian remained dominant until Macedonia declared independence in 1991. Even after 1944, when Macedonian was declared the official language of the Republic and rapidly standardized, Serbo-Croatian retained its dominance as the major language of Yugoslavia: It was the language of the army, of all inter-republic contact, and it was required in all schools. During the pre-1944 period, Turkish retained much of its cultural prestige. After 1944, however, the use and prestige of Turkish gradually declined. Part of this was due to demographics. Many Turks and other Muslims emigrated to Turkey, while Albanian Muslims came to Macedonia from Kosova. The normativization of Macedonian also affected the status of Turkish, not only by providing the majority of the population with its own dominant language, but also because in the course of standardization a conscious decision was made to exclude many Turkish borrowings from the literary norm, thus rendering them colloquial, low-style, archaic, or obsolete (cf. Friedman 1986). Nonetheless, Turkish remained the most prestigious Muslim language for several decades after World War Two.

During the 1970's, and especially after the Kosovo uprising of 1981, Albanian came to replace Turkish as the dominant language of Muslim identity. However, during the 1980's the Macedonian government followed Serbian practices of attempting to repress Albanian language and identity by enacting laws and ordinances that infringed on or eliminated many of the linguistic rights that had been gradually built up since 1944 and culminated in the Constitution of 1974. The result was a serious deepening of ethnic and linguistic tensions (cf. Friedman 1993b).

Since the declaration of Macedonian independence in 1991, the question of the position of Albanian within the Republic of Macedonia has been the most important source of internal ethno-political and linguistic tension.⁴ Albanian politicians demand that Albanian be co-equal with Macedonian in all spheres while Article 7 of the Macedonian constitution declares Macedonian as the official language and guarantees language rights ("official use") to other nationalities in those areas of local self-government where they constitute a majority or "a considerable number".

The post-1989 rise of multi-party politics also affected the position of Turkisms in the use of Macedonian in public discourse. Because the decision had been made to relegate Turkisms to a marginal position within literary Macedonian in the early years of codification, which were *de jure* under communist party rule, a conscious increase in the use of Turkisms has taken on the symbolism of opposition politics, or at the very least of a new pluralism in contrast to the old political monism.

At this point, we need to address the position of Turkisms in Macedonian. Heath (1989:1) points out the difficulty in distinguishing code-switching from borrowing: "It turns out that there are instances of mixing which are difficult to categorize in terms of this binary opposition, either because we seem to have partial adaptation or because there is little difference between code-switched and borrowed forms. There are additional problems involving, for example, items which look formally like unadapted code-switches but which function as borrowings (i.e. are commonly used and have stabilized in form)." The Turkish element in Macedonian, especially when viewed diachronically over the past century, is in precisely this position. On the one hand, it is undeniable that there are Turkish words functioning as fully naturalized borrowings showing phonological and morphological adaptation to Macedonian grammar, e.g. the borrowed adjective *kor* 'blind' (< T. *kör*) inflects for gender and number as in Macedonian. On the other hand, uninflected adjectives such as *guzel* 'beautiful' (< T. *güzel*) function on the same level but are not morphologically adapted. Unlike French or Norse borrowings in English, which most native speakers cannot distinguish from native words, the Turkish element in Macedonian is felt as such even by Macedonians who know little or no Turkish. Turkisms can thus function indexically as codeswitching.

As a result, the situation in Macedonia in 1994 in some ways resembles the situation at the beginning of the century, although in other respects there have been significant changes. The rise of Albanian prestige and nationalism in Macedonia as well as the identification of Turkish with anti-establishmentarianism during the recent rise of political pluralism has led to a revival of Turkish codeswitching lexically, which after Gysels (1992) we can argue is serving the connotative and indexical functions of codeswitching as opposed to the gap-filling of borrowing. At the same time, the decline of the use of Serbo-Croatian was both a symptom preceding and a result of Macedonian independence, and for the first time since 1913 (1941-44 excepted) it is the language of a foreign country rather than the federal government. Perceived competition from Albanian has also seen both official support for Romani language maintenance, and an increased popularity of Romani/Macedonian codeswitched songs, apparently at the expense of earlier Macedonian/Turkish codeswitched songs. Thus while in 1974, nineteenth-century Macedonian-Turkish codeswitched songs were not uncommon on the radio, in 1994

⁴ During the 1989-91 period, considerable polemics surrounded the question of Macedonian-Serbo-Croatian bilingualism (see Friedman 1993). Leaving aside mixed marriages, codeswitching into Serbo-Croatian occurs generally among members of those generations educated in Serbian schools and Albanians from Kosovo. The youngest generation of Macedonians is not studying Serbo-Croatian.

so-called newly-composed folk songs with codeswitching had Macedonian/Romani switches, although the old Macedonian/Turkish songs were still occasionally played.

In terms of codeswitching with Macedonian as the matrix language, it appears that different embedded languages serve different functions. Turkish is used to express nostalgia and political opposition, whereas Romani is strictly expressive and Albanian is limited to irony and humour. When Albanian is the matrix language, embedding of Macedonian generally occurs in negatively cathected contexts. Example (9) was a quotation in an event that was otherwise described entirely in Albanian, while example (10) was part of a political discussion.

- (9) Ti, drugar, **tha**, ne smeeš taka da zboruvaš, **tha**. Jas ke ti kažam, **tha**. Dobro.
Mirë.
You, comrade, he said, do not dare to talk like that, he said. I'll tell you, he said.
OK.

- (10) **Ç'na duhet hoxhallarët, pizda im materna, gi mamat luğeto**.
What do we need the clerics for, motherfuckers, they deceive the people.

Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish all make use of local non-standard varieties for humorous purposes, including political satire, e.g. in the press. Albanian, however, in which diglossia is in certain respects the strongest, also uses Geg⁵ to express serious political critique. Thus, for example, an article in the Albanian-language Macedonian newspaper *Flaka e vëllazërimit* (7:VII:91-8) describing the anguish of parents waiting at the Macedonian Red Cross in Skopje for news of their children sent to the front at the beginning of the Serbo-Croatian war, quoted the parents' criticism of the situation in Geg. It should be noted that the quotation was in standard, not dialectal Geg. The effect was to lend a sense of emotive urgency to the criticism. At the bottom of the prestige scale, Romani and Vlah permit the broadest range of codeswitches, generally with Macedonian, but also with Turkish and Albanian. It also appears that inter- versus intra-sentential codeswitching correlates to some extent with the sociolinguistic prestige hierarchy in the same way as knowledge of languages. Speakers of those languages with less prestige know more languages and also use more intrasentential codeswitching. Contrast the Albanian examples, where switches involved complete switch from one code to another (10), or quotational switches, with verbs of reporting kept in the matrix language (9), with the following example from a Romani radio interview:

- (11) Ta, bogami, adžikerdjum but butjake. Najnapred, te vakerav deka but sine mange teško bizi buti normalni.
And, really, I waited a long time for work. First of all, let me say that it was very hard for me without a real job.

Directions of language shift are determined by a combination of religion and prestige. Christians, regardless of native language, tend to assimilate to Macedonian, whereas Muslim Roms and Macedonians assimilate to Albanian or Turkish. In earlier decades, there was also assimilation in the direction Albanian to Turkish, but more recently the direction

⁵ Literary Albanian is based on Tosk (southern), but all the Albanians of Kosovo and most of Macedonia speak Geg (northern), which until the linguistic unification of 1968 had its own literary traditions.

of assimilation has been reversed. Region also plays a role, however, with some Macedonian Muslim villages choosing Albanian and others Turkish identity.

We have been discussing directionality of codeswitches in terms of the most dominant patterns. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that in Macedonia linguistic contact occurs in all possible directions. Space does not permit a detailed exposition here, but the following two examples illustrate intrasentential switching into Albanian and Macedonian in dialectal Turkish that also involve switching within a constituent structure:

(12) Gelmedi se varisi işi. (Jašar–Nasteva 1970:298)
He did not come since he had work.

(13) Bana bir karta drugo mesto al.
Buy me a second class ticket. (Friedman 1982:70)

The spread of Albanian via Islam and Macedonian via Christianity that is attested from the nineteenth century continues in rural areas, each at the expense of the other and of Turkish, Romani, and Vlah. The imposition of Serbo–Croatian for most of this century is reflected in the codeswitching of the educated older generations and in the speech of Albanians from Kosova, for whom Serbo–Croatian was the dominant language and for whom Macedonian represents, in a sense, a less prestigious language. The younger generation of Macedonians, however, is not learning Serbo–Croatian. To this can be added the fact that some Macedonians avoid Serbo–Croatian codeswitching out of patriotic sentiment.

In this exposition, I have tried to illustrate some of the continuities and discontinuities in codeswitching patterns on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia from the nineteenth century to the present, although limitations of spaces do not permit consideration of all the complexities. The past century has seen significant differentiation in levels of linguistic standardization with subsequent shifts in hegemony and control. Patterns of codeswitching have been affected by political change, but at the same time, they are also manipulated to affect those changes as well as a complex series of interethnic and hierarchical social relations. The rise, decline, and revival of Turkish/Macedonian codeswitching, the expansion and contraction of Macedonian/Serbo–Croatian codeswitching, the steady expansion of Albanian language–shift among Muslims (as well as Macedonian language–shift among Christians), the declining position of Vlah, the marginal position of Romani, all reflect and affect political change. Current developments are taking place in a broader context of disintegration or "transition" that bears a depressingly striking resemblance to the beginning of the twentieth century, if not the beginning of the eighth. The Macedonian case helps demonstrate the fact that the specifics of codeswitching, both the choice and employment of languages and the nature and type of codeswitch itself, is subject to manipulation by political forces but at the same time can be employed to reify them. Moreover, codeswitching in the Republic of Macedonia raises issues of the nature of the continuum from codeswitching to borrowing, the nature of constraints, and possible correlations between intersentential versus intrasentential codeswitching and sociolinguistic factors within a single society (cf. Gal 1987). In a social context in which speakers are aware of other languages without necessarily being proficient in them, the concept of codeswitch/borrowing takes on not just a structural but also a social significance. The specific value of a codeswitching tendency, like the value of an utterance, must be seen in its context.

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